

---

---

# BULLETIN

---


---

June 74

No 5

WORKERS  
DEMOCRACY and  
the WRP

SOLZHENITSYN  
CLAY CROSS Conf.  
ATUA and Thornett  
WEST LONDON  
COUNCIL of ACTION  
Etc.



INDEX

Editorial	i - vii
History of British Trotskyism & Appeal	viii
Solzhenitsyn	1 - 8
A Travesty of Revolutionary Democracy	9 - 12
The Cassidy Affair	13 - 19
The Hunter Affair	20 - 21
The West London Council of Action	22 - 27
The Clay Cross Conference	28 - 32
The ATUA and the Defence of Alan Thornett	33 - 36
Democratic Centralism and the WRF	37 - 41

29 East Street, Osney, Oxford. (Correspondence)

In  
its  
wit

Bo  
IS  
wi  
by  
qu  
wi

We  
th  
w:  
a  
E  
t  
w  
f  
s  
w  
h  
f  
i

C  
l  
m  
S  
i  
s  
a  
t  
f  
a  
y  
y

EDITORIAL

In the serialised 'reply' to the Bulletin, Workers Press declared itself quite categorically as being in full support of democracy within the working class movement:

'Our whole history shows that we have always stood for the full democratic rights of all tendencies to fight for their policies inside the working class movement. Every serious worker knows that this right has been extended always to the labour and trade union bureaucracy. Again, for us, this is a vital principle. We do not believe that the differences in the movement can be clarified except on the basis of a full discussion on all matters of theory, programme and policy.'

(WF, 22 May 1974, p.9. original emphasis)

Nor is this all. About a year ago, the former SLL, together with the IS and IWC, concluded a formal agreement to fight for full democracy within the workers' movement and against all attempts to subvert it by the capitalist state and its various agencies. Once again, we quote verbatim from WF, from a speech by G. Healy to a joint meeting with the IWC and IS in defence of workers' democratic rights:

'When we are talking about democratic rights, we are talking about the democratic rights of the working class. It is not a question of gaining an advantage over one another in this battle, but of protecting these rights which allow us to function'.

(WF 18th April, 1973, p.2)

We subscribe fully to these principles. Yet in recent weeks, we find that the leadership of the WRF does not. True it can share a platform with Tories and Scottish Nationalists, and use that joint platform to attack the Communist and Labour Parties (Dumbarton Central General Election campaign of Stephen Hammond); but when it comes to upholding the rights of the WRF's political critics within the Labour movement, we not only discover that the Healy-Panda leadership stands aside from the defence of minority views, but actively and indeed forcibly suppresses them. The documents and other materials reproduced elsewhere in this Bulletin will substantiate this charge, revealing how hollow is the demagogic claim of WF that it has 'always stood for full democratic rights of all tendencies to fight for their politics inside the working class movement.'

Older members of the WRF especially will no doubt remember when they last encountered such degrading, reactionary tactics in the workers' movement. They were of course the standard method used by the Stalinists to prevent the small Trotskyist movement from intervening in the crisis of Stalinism to win workers and intellectuals to the standpoint of authentic Leninism. At the time of Hungary, and again after the 1961 22nd CPSU Congress, Trotskyists fought for the right to enter and speak at Stalinist public meetings and they were justified in every sense to do so. Not only did they have the right to attend and speak at such meetings, workers had the right to hear what they had to say about the origins of the crisis which Stalinism was then experiencing.

Partly out of this fight for democratic rights against Stalinism, many CP members were won to Trotskyism, some of the supporters of the Bulletin group included. How ironic and revolting that we should now find ourselves the victims and targets of the same methods and slanders, when we attempt to open a discussion inside the WRF on the nature and origins of its crisis, and seek to fight for our own political line in the workers' movement in general. For it is we who are now told are 'agents', not it is true, of the CIA (though this slander was initially retailed by S. Torrance to a group of WRF members in F. London), but of the OCI, that we serve the interests of capitalism by strike-breaking and 'lurking' in the 'shadows' of the Labour Party (where Healy and company also spent a considerable portion of their political lives!), and that very soon, we will actually become the stoutest defenders of the bourgeois state in its attacks on the working class. All these slanders we will answer in good time and in the method of our choosing; one that will not damage the reputation of the Trotskyist movement. But in the case of the Hunter and Cassidy affairs, we are obliged to act now, as this cynical disregard to workers' democracy is threatening not only to blacken the name of militants in the Labour movement, but actively to disrupt the struggle of the working class against the employers and the Labour government.

Finally, a word about democracy within the WRF. Here too, things are not all that they should be, nor as Healy would have his members believe. WRF members would, we think, be interested to know that their constitution accepted unanimously by the WRF founding conference in November, 1973, is being violated almost daily by the Healy-Banda-Torrance 'Troika', which in practice constitutes an anti-party fraction within and even against the official leading bodies of the WRF. We have learned that this clique have ordered the Control Commission to cease all inquiries into alleged unconstitutional acts of certain leading WRF members, Healy, Torrance and Banda included. Yet the WRF Constitution is quite clear and specific on the powers of the Control Commission:

'The Annual Congress (of the WRF) shall elect a Control Commission of three members, not members of the Central Committee. The Control Commission shall have the power to conduct any investigation that the Central Committee or the National Congress think necessary, or to inquire into the complaint of any individual member, and shall present its findings to the Central Committee or Political Committee for action. The Control Commission is responsible to the National Congress and reports to it on its work.'

(emphasis added)

So there is no question of the Control Commission being subject to the veto of the Political Committee since the Control Commission is responsible only to the National Congress, the highest body of the WRF. Moreover, there is not a word in the constitution of the WRF about any limits to the scope of the activities of the Control Commission, nothing about leading members of the Political Committee such as Healy, Banda and Torrance being above scrutiny. Yet the Political Committee has stepped in to bloc the perfectly constitutional investigation of the activities of these three by the Control Commission on the grounds that such investigations would jeopardise the 'security' of the WRF. The clause of the constitution cited to justify this breach of party rules is 5(d) which states that,

'The Political Committee (elected by the Central Committee) shall carry full powers of the Central Committee between meetings of the Central Committee.

'... The Political Committee is responsible to the Central Committee and reports to it on its work'

(emphasis added)

Now if this clause is so interpreted as to empower the Political Committee to over-rule or subvert the work of the Control Commission then this violates both the spirit and the letter of the already cited clause 9 (d) on the functions of the Control Commission.

By in effect winding-up the Control Commission, appointed by the Congress and charged by the Congress with a duty of ensuring that the Constitution is upheld (even, if necessary, against the leadership) the Political Committee is setting itself up in opposition to the Congress, the highest body of the WRP. Perhaps this is what Banda and Torrance mean by the 'dictatorship of the party', a theory which they expounded, we understand, in a recent confrontation with party members who asked for the rights of minorities to be defended within the WRP.

Healy, Banda and Torrance are treading a slippery path, one that will carry them and those who blindly follow them far away from Bolshevism. But let us look even more closely at this pretext of 'security', which is used to subvert the work of the Control Commission in its investigations into the allegations against Healy, Banda and Torrance. The claim that this procedure can be overturned on the grounds of 'security' is fatuous, and serves as the starting point for far worse violations of members' rights, as the experience of the CFCU in the early years of the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy has taught us. Moreover it is a pretext that not even the Healy leadership accepts - at least, when it is employed by other political tendencies and organisations to silence critics within their ranks. It will be recalled that WF was most insistent that the IMG leave no stone unturned to unravel the motives behind the activities of Lawless, who last year went to the capitalist press and the police to protest his innocence over London bomb incidents. He also went so far as to suggest that the IRA Provisionals were responsible.

Unlike the WRP, the IMG did in fact call in its Control Commission, and it began hearings into the Lawless affair. But then one of the IMG leadership, Pennington (who had only a matter of weeks earlier, shared a joint platform with Healy at a meeting in defence of workers' democracy!) intervened in the hearings to protect Lawless on the grounds of ... 'security'. This is what the outraged democrats of the WF had to say on that occasion:

'The IMG Control Commission investigation into the conduct of Lawless was the high point of the conspiracy to cover up for his unprincipled political activities during the August-September bombs campaign. The key figure in organising the cover-up was Robert Pennington, the IMG's National Secretary. His role was first of all to appear to agree with the demands of the membership by setting up a Control Commission to inquire into Lawless. His next step was the strangle the independent conduct of the Commission's activities. He did this in two ways.

By presenting himself at meetings of the Control Commission there by inhibiting its deliberations, and by joining Lawless in refusing to answer questions on the grounds of 'security'.'

(A. Mitchell, The Lawless Affair, WF, 15th December, 1973, p.3. emphasis added)

What do we learn from this quotation?

1. That WRP believes the Control Commission should function independently of all other bodies and members, even when the member in question is the National Secretary. (G. Realy is, of course, the national secretary of the WRP).
2. That it is a violation of democratic centralism when a leading member or outside body of the party seeks to 'strangle the independent conduct of the Control Commission activities' by citing 'the grounds of 'security''.

Here we have no differences with WR. Problems only arise when we turn the spotlight on the functionings of party democracy inside the WRP. But to proceed with Mitchell's onslaught on the IMG 'stranglers'. To back up his case against Pennington, Mitchell cites with full approval a letter of resignation from the IMG Control Commission by one of its six members who investigated the Lawless affair. We quote from it at length here not only because we, too, agree with its sentiments (only our agreement with it goes beyond seeking a squalid factional advantage against the IMG leadership), but because it provides us with a devastating answer to the lying claims of the WRP Political Committee that this body has the right to over-ride the Control Commission and to 'strangle its independent conduct' into the activities of Realy, Banda and Torrance:

'The Control Commission is not a self-perpetuating body. Nor is it elected by the National Committee or Political Committee. It is elected by the highest body in our movement - by the delegates at each National Conference. The Control Commission is therefore directly responsible to the National Conference for its work. The purpose of a Control Commission is not to work out political line, tactics or strategy, but to look into any situation in which it is considered that the constitution, discipline, principles or organisational norms of our movement are being violated. It has the authority to proceed in the manner it considers best, to call before it any member to seek and receive any information or facts it considers relevant. Having done this, the Control Commission is then required to draw up a report containing proposals for action, either collectively or individually ... The Political Committee has no authority to determine what the Control Commission does or does not discuss - only the Commission itself can decide this question.

... Comrade Pennington's position as the National Secretary gives him no authority over and above that of any other member of the IMG ... Comrade Pennington now argues that in being present together with comrade Lawless, he was only carrying out the 'instructions' of the Political Committee. If this is the case, although there is nothing in the Political Committee minutes to indicate this, then the Political Committee itself abused its authority as a leadership body ... In my opinion the presence of comrade Pennington throughout most of the hearings of the Control Commission was prejudicial to the conduct of the Commission. Comrade Pennington's presence cut across the autonomous character of the Commission and was a gross interference to its work.

Comrades Lawless and Pennington refused to reply to numerous questions asked by the Commission on the

grounds of 'security' ... To refuse to give information or answer questions due to 'security reasons' (or for that matter any other reason) is violation of the rights and responsibilities of the Control Commission. It is my understanding that in a Trotskyist organisation anyone who is called before the Control Commission is duty bound to give all relevant and available information in their possession .. A new precedent has been set which cuts into the democratic rights and principled functioning of an elected body ...'

(Emphasis added)

Mitchell ventures the following comment (rather imprudently in view of subsequent developments within his own organisation) on this statement,

'The intervention that saved Lawless from being exposed was Pennington's. Apart from interfering with the Control Commission's procedure, he also substantiated Lawless's story that the Provisional IRA had launched the bombs campaign in Britain, quoting 'secret, independent sources'. This use of such sources, which are to be kept from the membership of his own organisation and its Control Commission is completely unacceptable.'

The WRF leaders are super-democrats when it is a matter of exposing the violations of democratic centralism in rival organisations. But now we find it going far beyond Pennington in preventing an unfettered investigation into charges against its own members. Says Mitchell, 'The Lawless affair and the role of its leadership in the cover-up demonstrates conclusively that this group has no adherence at all to revolutionary Marxism.' Clearly Mitchell selects as one of his criteria of adherence to revolutionary Marxism a leadership that does not usurp or subvert the free functioning of the Control Commission. By his own standards, Mitchell's leading comrades stand condemned along with Pennington and Lawless. The number-one question now is, will the WRF Control Commission permit itself to be 'strangled'? Will its chairman, Cyril Smith, himself a witness to several brutal violations of democratic centralism, including the physical intimidation of party comrades, now follow the excellent example set by the IIC Control Commission member, and declare that either the Commission must be permitted to function freely, or he will resign? For he must surely know that unless he takes such a stand, he himself becomes the tool of reactionary forces within the Party. He must put aside his political opinions, and act as the custodian of democratic centralism within the party, even to the extent of openly defying Healy, Panda and Torrance. He has the mandate and the duty to do so.

What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Healy and Pennington, the two champions of workers' democracy have been exposed as demagogues. Democracy in other organisations? of course - when it suits their own factional ends. But genuine democratic centralism - the highest form of workers' democracy - in their own? That's another question!

Those who seek to strangle democracy within both their own organisations and the workers' movement as a whole do so not because of some strange quirk of personality. The Healys and the Penningtons the Cliffs and in their time, the Pablos and the Cannons, act in this way because they fear the consequences of thoroughgoing political discussion and debate, in which no leader, however exalted his real or imagined status, is immune from criticism. The working class cannot resolve its problems and internal political differences of

principle, tactics, strategy and programme unless it upholds the right of all tendencies within the movement to argue their case, while sharing the common tasks and honouring the rights of others in the movement. The Bulletin group, which fights in the Labour Party and the trade unions for its views, has as much right to present its ideas as the Communist Party, the ILO, IS, WRF or any other grouping in the Labour movement. And we assure Healy and company: no-one is going to take that right away from us, no more than we will allow slanders on our comrades to pass unrefuted and unretracted.

As for the internal regime in the WRF, these arguments have a double force. The vanguard party cannot live and develop without the broadest and most deep going democracy, no more than it can intervene effectively in the workers' movement without complete unity of action and discipline. Neither of these two components of Bolshevik democratic centralism can be violated without immediately impairing the other. The suppression of democratic rights in the party undermines its ability to correct mistakes, to evolve the policies, tactics and strategy necessary to lead the working class to power. Had Stalin's regime of 1927 operated in April, 1917, Lenin would have been expelled as a Trotskyist and the entire party disoriented in the face of great events. To re-arm the party politically demands the fullest internal democracy, just as even the broadest democracy will convert the party into a liberal debating club unless it is directed towards the tasks of the hour, and subordinated to the need to act in a united and disciplined manner in the struggles of the working class.

To forcibly eject WRF members from party meetings on the completely unsubstantiated charge that they are 'agents' and 'spies', and then to deny them the right to charge those responsible for this outrage may seem to the impressionable petty bourgeois radicals now in the ascendant in the WRF to be very 'tough', 'Bolshevik' and 'proletarian'. We should warn such elements that it was under the slogans of 'Bolshevism' and 'proletarianisation' that the Troika of Stalin, Kamanev and Zinoviev initiated the struggle against what later became the Trotskyist Left Opposition.

The WRF Congress approaches. Comrades wrongfully expelled and slandered may well demand their constitutional right to appeal to this Congress, the highest body of the Party, to reverse these decisions of the leadership. Listen to what they have to say, and remember that to disagree with the official party line and the actions of the leadership does not in itself constitute a breach of Party rules. Quite probably you may disagree with their political views, or at least some of them. But you are duty bound as a communist to fight for the right to make them public inside the Party, to constitute themselves as a tendency or a faction, and to submit and have circulated written materials in accordance with the ten-day rule.

The WF 'Reply' attempted, in its last installment, to project the cult of Healy as the 'acknowledged leader' of the WRF, selected by history to lead the British Revolution. Clearly if one subscribes to such an idealist, reactionary conception of leadership, the repression of minorities is not only necessary but justified. Marxism is the enemy of all cults, and most of all, of messianism, either national or individual.. As Trotsky wrote in April, 1933 against the crushing of party democracy by the Stalin clique:

'Blind obedience is a virtue in a soldier of a capitalist army but not in a proletarian fighter. Revolutionary discipline is rooted in collective thought and will. A supporter of the theory of scientific communism does not take anything on word.



He judges everything by reason and experience. The youth cannot accept Marxism on command, must assimilate it for itself through an independent effort of thought. This is precisely why the youth should have the opportunity not only to educate itself but also to make mistakes in order to rise through its own errors to a Communist conception. Bureaucracy and artificial discipline has crumbled to dust at the moment of danger. Revolutionary discipline does not exclude but demands the right of checking and criticism. Only in this way can an indestructible army be created. The young worker needs leadership from the party.. But this should not be leadership by command. When at every step coercion is substituted for persuasion, the breath disappears from the organisation ... Not only must we reject but also mercilessly destroy the use of repression, slander and physical methods in the struggle of the different groups and factions inside the workers' movement. These invidious methods have nothing in common with the arsenal of Communist education. Brought into the workers' movement during the last ten years by the Stalinist bureaucracy, they have poisoned the atmosphere of the proletarian vanguard ...'

(L. Trotsky: Blind Obedience,  
Revolutionary Discipline and the Youth  
10th April, 1933)

Now there is a fresh source of infection which must be combatted with equal severity. Begin the struggle for democratic centralism within the CP, and for genuine workers' democracy in the Labour movement.

THE HISTORY OF BRITISH TROTSKYISM

We note with considerable interest that the WRE is now taking steps to implement a decision taken at the 1965 Conference of the SLL and the 1966 International Conference to undertake a history of the Trotskyist movement in Britain and take this opportunity to point out that similar moves were in fact made at that time but were terminated within a matter of weeks.

However, as we announced in Bulletin No. 4, we are preparing this history and the group has now appointed a highly-qualified group of historians with access to all relevant archives. This group has now begun its work, and progress reports will appear in future issues of the Bulletin with short introductory articles having relevance to the current political situation.

.....

APPEAL

This is the fifth number of the Bulletin, and by far the largest both in size and number of copies produced. For this reason, we now find it necessary to appeal to our readers and supporters for financial support. Already we have received substantial donations to help us meet our production and postage costs, but it is time to place this support on a more permanent footing.

All donations should be sent to 29 East Street, Oxford, and made payable to 'The Bulletin'.

On 14  
that  
alone  
that  
anti-  
on th  
  
Solzh  
migh  
1966  
karye

If a  
as t  
Solz  
Russ  
unho  
is a  
and  
Amal

The  
list  
west  
they  
the  
oppo  
nois  
grea  
wou  
ene

Sol

Lit  
Tro  
or  
jou  
dec  
tes  
not  
tho  
dou  
Sol  
did  
'Wa

Ove  
bar  
fee  
fai

SOLZHENITSYN

On 14th February 1974, the bourgeois press thundered with the news that Alexander Isayevich Solzhenitsyn had been wronged again. Not they alone. The "Morning Star" condemned the expulsion. And WP, proving that its support for Solzhenitsyn had 'nothing in common with bourgeois anti-communism', led with the headline 'Stalinists (photo of Gollan) on the spot'. Indeed they were. But what kind of spot?

Solzhenitsyn's expulsion removes all fear that Trotskyist criticism might assist his persecutors - a groundless anxiety in any case. In 1966, defending "Cancer Ward" and the 'thirst for uncompromising truth' Karyakin alleged:

'That book ("One Day") was condemned unanimously in the pages of the Trotskyist, Chinese and Albanian presses. ... favourable reviews came from the biggest Communist Parties, the most outstanding Marxists of the day ...'

If any real (or imitation) Trotskyist tendency did condemn "One Day", as this thirster for truth testifies, then no harm of it came to Solzhenitsyn. Both sides in those Writers' Union debates invoked Russian nationalism as the highest principle: and Trotskyism is as unholy and as un-Russian as the Yellow Peril. The bureaucratic faction is as likely to quote our commendation against him. ('Only Trotskyists and reactionaries give unqualified support to Solzhenitsyn ...'). Amalgams are inevitable.

The bureaucracy demanded of Solzhenitsyn that he repudiate the imperialist exploitation of his name, i.e. that he sever his life-line to the western bourgeoisie. The intent was doubly malicious. If he accepted, they could destroy him at leisure. A refusal discredits and disheartens the opposition that really frightens them - for only a communist opposition can pose a threat to their legitimacy. Christians they can noisily expel; Leninists they must quietly crucify. Solzhenitsyn's great reputation is an embarrassment of course, but the bourgeoisie would never have created that reputation if Solzhenitsyn were a serious enemy of privilege.

Solzhenitsyn's Reputation

Literary reputations, we know, can sink or swim with political tides. Trotsky's great history of the Revolution, comparable with Clarendon or Thucydides, was never in danger of a Nobel Prize; and his 1915 journalism goes still unpublished, whereas every N.W.1 bookshelf is decorated with that grey legend, "August 1914". A difficulty of testing opinions about Solzhenitsyn is that his professed admirers do not have time to finish his books; but since the literary merits of those books are a political issue someone must be allowed to venture doubts about his literary power. The journalistic illusion that Solzhenitsyn is another Tolstoy would be less damaging to him if he did not share it himself. "August 1914" was plainly Volume I of his 'War and Peace'. Future volumes will unrelentingly follow.

Overpraise within the USSR is understandable enough, given the barrenness of Soviet literature, the needs of advocacy, and the feelings of thousands of camp survivors who find his prison novels a faithful witness of their suffering.

From a moving letter to Solzhenitsyn:

'You have taken the picture of quite a day ... reading your story ("One Day") and comparing it with the camp, it is impossible to distinguish one from the other. They are as alike as two peas - the arrangement of the compound, the punishment block, the attitude of the prisoners ...'

In the west the avant garde professors and the New Left cinéastes forgave him his socialist realism, exempting him from their lazy a priori formula that the forms of great literature ought to move with the times. Self-absorbed writers like Mercer and Storey, edging furtively towards God (time is not yet sufficiently out-of-joint for clamorous conversion) found the Solzhenitsyn affair a satisfying image of the Writer-Victim suffering for his solitary vision. Mercer, politically tutored by the SLL, was shocked out of his psyche by the news ("Gulag Archipelago") that there were camps in 1918, (imagine it, camps in 1918!) and decanonised Lenin in consequence.

The Stalinists tried to appease both the Kremlin and Liberal opinion with the fatuous extenuation that persecution is a proof of respect. Truly, no-one takes literature as seriously as the censor! The "Morning Star" handed the subject to Ivor Montague, a venerable figure whose special talent lies in not giving offence. Solzhenitsyn is given a bad mark for dwelling too much on the black side - presumably he should balance his novels with some cheerful episodes and 'positive' characters - and a good mark for providing information which sociology will need 'when it makes a truer, more perceptive examination, more in context'. Montague does not attack Solzhenitsyn as an anti-Bolshevik writer, and he regards an understanding of the Lenin and Stalin periods as outside the grasp of present Marxism but within the power of future sociology! His defensiveness represents the middle class: vestigial idealisation of the USSR, not the attraction it exerts on workers as the birthplace of their power. The Solzhenitsyn affair disturbs the CP courtship of reformism (i.e. increasing adaptation to their own bourgeoisie). That is the spot he puts them in.

Correctly, WF has defended Solzhenitsyn's democratic rights. In addition we would expect it to scrutinise his work closely, distinguishing the valuable from the false; to locate his position as exactly as possible in the opposition spectrum; and to analyse with due suspicion the fate of his reputation in non-Marxist circles. This has not happened. Apart from Tom Kemp, no WF writer seems aware that Solzhenitsyn is an anti-Marxist. And even for Kemp:

'Solzhenitsyn follows in the footsteps of Trotsky, who made the truth known at the time against the scepticism and hostility of the liberal supporters of Popular Frontism'.

But no scepticism and hostility for Solzhenitsyn. In general WF has defended him uncritically, thereby perhaps clearing its name of all suspicions of 'softness' on Stalinism (i.e. Stalinism as radicals understand it, as a synonym for KGB terror, not, as with the scientific Marxist concept, a system of ideas and practices which reveals and explains hidden affinities between apparently diverse historical phenomena - such as Stalin and Solzhenitsyn). They find a problem in defending an anti-communist writer and solve it by pretending that e.g. "August 1914" is not an anti-communist book. Future volumes of this work will put them 'on the spot'!

### Is Solzhenitsyn Tolstoy?

Literary criticism, even when remote from politics, is notoriously subjective. For many critics, Solzhenitsyn's greatness stands in no need of proof. Lukács has devoted to Solzhenitsyn eighty pages of gaseous prose which hover far above the content of the work awarding or withholding classifications whose definitions are vague or normative. Is Solzhenitsyn as 'realist' or a 'naturalist'?? In spite of Lukács - a good mind softened by forty years of euphemism - we find that Solzhenitsyn's prison notebooks do fulfil the programme of some late nineteenth century naturalists; they photograph the 'ignoble' surfaces of an ignoble society. They do not show us the heart of a changing organism. The reportage is more veridical than Zola, Lukács' prime naturalist, whose coarse imagination lets 'sordid' theatricals obscure the view; but it is not more accurate than Gissing. Solzhenitsyn's subject matter is of world-historical importance, and as an eyewitness he shares that importance; whereas no-one remembers, say, the two million 'surplus' women who were the historical substratum of Gissing's minor novel 'about' Victorian spinsterhood, "Odd Women". But compare Solzhenitsyn's treatment of Russian surplus women (prisoners' wives, Vera in "Cancer Ward") and remark the banality of his imagination. His characterisation is merely trait-building. He can portray the kind of suffering that stares you in the face, no detail spared (the photo of the lover who did not return, the lonely room, the friendly radio, insomnia, work as opium ...)

With this Christian writer evil does not have deep roots in history, let alone in 'the soul', On the one side, the malignant bureaucracy and its stupid creatures, on the other side frustrated human decency. As propaganda this will serve. Solzhenitsyn has a bureaucratic outlook: he likes simple analyses and tidy solutions. Do readers who have not experienced conditions which resemble Solzhenitsyn's description 'like two peas' encounter moments of self-recognition? Do they find characters whose names must become words?

Solzhenitsyn has suffered considerably, as the world knows, and he tries to punish history by inserting himself into his novels and giving himself a fair trial. But he is not artist enough to subdue and objectify his self-surrogates - identifiable as the most upright and perceptive characters - so we view the world through the prism of their desires. Thus in "Cancer Ward" he interposes Kostoglotov-Solzhenitsyn to over-prosecute the case against the ultimate bureaucrat Rusanov, a self-condemned character. In "The First Circle" the fate and character of Rubin has a genuine poignancy, but the story and the irony of the story - a good man encompassing the destruction of another good man - is crowded out by the sub-Tolstoyan panorama and the didactic presence of Herzhin-Solzhenitsyn. Subtract him from this over-populated novel, strengthen the characters hostile to Rubin, say more about Rubin's crime - this attractive man has committed crimes - and you have not only a better but a more complex novel. Rubin stands for that generation of selfless communists who did terrible, self-deceiving and 'patriotic' things to build Socialism in One Country. The likes of Rusanov depended on the likes of him. Solzhenitsyn sees Rubin as an instance of 'Revolution devouring its own children' or some such nonsense, but that is not what prevents him from telling the story rightly. The teller need not understand his own tale: the interaction of outlook and work is complex. If the artist draws the right dramatic conclusions from his fictional premises the lessons can be deduced later. What hinders Solzhenitsyn's art is not his conservatism but his tendentiousness.

'Ethical Socialism in One Country'

Solzhenitsyn aspires to explain what he has described. His mission on earth is to solve the mystery of the age; 'Why did Stalin happen?' The answer is not to be found in the conflict of real historical forces as in "The Revolution Betrayed" - it is to be traced to a historic original sin. Solzhenitsyn is the willing captive of a fixed idea. That is why he will never honestly confront Marxism.

It is a melancholy fact that none of the savants in "The First Circle" gives a hint or glimmering of a Marxist idea. In fact there are no original conceptions of any kind. Soviet intellectual life appears to subsist on mediocre varieties of Statism, liberalism, mysticism, ecologism, etc. There is no freshness of thought, right or left. Solzhenitsyn himself is a sad exemplification of the intellectual poverty he laments. There is not one memorable generalisation in the body of his work.

The Bureaucracy defends itself principally by keeping a murderous clutch on the windpipe of living Marxism. In the camps there must be undercurrents of truth however. Solzhenitsyn is slyly knowing about matters which he imagines to be an embarrassment to Marxists - Kronstadt, the laws of dialectics, Engels on mathematics, the 'twenties prediction that the USA and Britain would come to blows. Like his self-surrogate Nerzhin he has questioned survivors of the purges. But the voice of the Left Opposition is never heard.

Three characters in "The First Circle" are presented as honest intelligent Marxists: Adamson, Rubin and Radovic. They prove their honesty and intelligence by their disgust with the regime. They prove their 'Marxism' by fanaticism, gullibility and priggishness. Rubin's faith that the apparatus objectively embodies progress is Koestlerian mysticism: communists who accepted the bitter consequences of 'Socialism in One Country' had a better understanding of their situation than he is allowed. (c.f. Serge's "Case of Comrade Tulayev"). Adamson has the history of a real Marxist - an oppositionist imprisoned in 1929, an organiser of the *Vorkuta* strikes - but as a hero among victims he keeps aloof from the prisoners' debates, so his Marxism remains off-stage: his secret 'understanding' of the 'twenties period is mentioned as a piece of useless esoteric learning.

Marxists can, of course, be fanatical, gullible and priggish. But in Solzhenitsyn that is what their Marxism consists in. Nor can even a fragment of Marxism emerge, for our compass is read by Nerzhin, the christian-patriot-mathematician who plans to write a book like "1914". We have to suffer a Correct Line that is not even correct.

But if Nerzhin is the repository of wisdom, the other characters in "The First Circle" have enough reality and insight to retain our unguided sympathy for their various fates. In "August 1914", however, the wise and the foolish are conspicuously segregated, labelled and graded. Practical wisdom inheres in:

'The closed fraternity of General Staff Officers and perhaps a handful of engineers as well, (who) were conscious of the fact that the world, and Russia with it, was moving invisibly, inaudibly and imperceptibly into a new era ... All Russia from the imperial family down to the Revolutionaries naively thought that they were breathing the same old air and living on familiar ground: only a handful of engineers and officers were gifted with a perception

to sense that the stars themselves were moving into new conjunctures.'

Colonel Vorsyntsyn - alias you know who - is very much the hero of the book and of the battle. A member of the Closed Fraternity, he deplores the 1905 not as a vulgar jingoist but as a seer of 'new conjunctures'. Tannenburg is 'the first defeat which set the course of the war for Russia ...' The WF review continued this quotation at length, with its catalogue of Tsarist blunders, but it omitted the preceding remark giving its significance:

'Who can name the decisive battle of a war which lasted four years and strained the nation's morale to breaking point ... uselessly and irretrievably snatching from us our bravest and strongest men and leaving the second-raters.'

The anonymous WF reviewer, coming out boldly against Tsarism, said the novel could not be anti-Soviet since it did not have a soviet subject matter. At the same time he accused the Kremlin of 'retrospective defencism' which constrains them to cover up Tsarist bungles in order to cover up the bungles of Stalin in World War II. But "August 1914" is a defencist-chauvinistic novel which castigates Tsarist blimpiness for its incompetent defence. In "War and Peace" the picture of bungling 'high ups' reflects the suspicions of simple soldiers and peasants, the masses who make history in the long run, and the stock categories of military virtue are all put in question. Solzhenitsyn takes all those categories for granted and condemns the blundering Grand Dukes and their favourites from the standpoint of bourgeois-technocratic know-how, personified by the Closed Fraternity.

Another wise person is engineer Obodovsky, who thinks the Union of Engineers 'could easily become one of the leading forces in Russia, more constructive and important than any political party'. He worries about population and the need to colonise Siberia before someone else does. Engineer Arkhangorodsky is a coarser fellow whose prosperity has dulled his idealism but not his shrewdness. 'On one side Black Hundreds, on the other side Red Hundreds, and in between a few people trying to do a job of work.'

Spiritual wisdom is dispensed by incidental sages. Tolstoy in person appears but as a false prophet offering empty oracular pacifism. When his disciple, Sanya, volunteers, 'feeling sorry for Russia', he has the applause of the novelist. A truer prophet is Varsonief.

'History is irrational, young man ... The best social order cannot be arbitrarily constructed or even scientifically constructed. You cannot invent an ideal social order ... there is a justice which existed before us and is there for its own sake - the task is to divine it ... we should develop our own soul.'

Yes, yes, yes. But what is one to do? He tells us:

'I can't prove it but I feel for some reason it is important that Russia's backbone not be broken. And for that young men must go to war.'

Historic understanding is provided by professor Andozerskaya, who discerns that:

'There is a spiritual life apart from the environment -

the spiritual life of the individual ... who therefore has a personal responsibility for what he does.'

To be fair she does not mention the perfectability of man; but she very easily might.

And so it goes. These banalities are presented without irony. They are not merely the voices of the characters, they are the voice of the novel itself which endorses them through editorials and proverbs, stages the dialectic in their favour, and assigns them to characters with citations for wisdom or responsibility.

Solzhenitsyn's key idea, if idea it can be called is that evil arises when we allow the large abstract ideals of 'Ideology' to overcome our natural sense of objective justice, and construct moralities based on hatred. Bad ideals have deformed Russia; good ideals - and good management - might save her. Mixed up with this is a quietist feeling that ideas and ideals are far too excellent to possess reality, too feeble to procure it for themselves. And if reality and ideal are divorced then Solzhenitsyn's own dreams, half-truths though they are, appear as true and real in his understanding, which prides itself on obedience to the Imperative Ought which he takes especial pleasure in applying to politics. As if Russia only waited to learn how it ought to be, and was not! Objective justice stands above nation and history, valid for all times and places but local, patriotic imperatives are given to conscience.

'For example, I am sure that the best among the Arabs understand that - according to justice - Israel has a right to exist and live ...' (Letter to students, 1967)

Justice is what Solzhenitsyn and the best Arabs know it to be.

Spiritual folly in "August 1914" resides with the young folk who are either duly silenced by all this philosophy or who retaliate with slogans (We must smash the system! We are molecules of the environment!) Lenartovitch, the student most resembling a communist, cuts an ignoble figure. His name and circumstances are curiously suggestive of Lenin - a relative executed for terrorism, German blood, training as a lawyer - and his sophistic skill enables him to win an argument against an army doctor busy saving lives. Naturally your sympathies are drawn to the doctor rather than to revolutionary defeatism. Lenartovitch tries to desert in order to save his skin for the revolution. He stands foreignly apart with a 'twisted smile of condescension' for patriotic peasants carrying their dead commander back to Russian soil. The plot foils his desertion and irony makes his safety depend on the courage, resource and patriotism of Vorosyntsyn, who has to remind the young ideologue that 'decency is better than swinishness'. Solzhenitsyn tries to be fair to the bad guys as well as the good guys, and in trait-building Lenartovitch he allows him 'sincerity' but in a world where the noblest action is to die for your country, it is hard to count a deserter as more than a deserter. To fasten on one point: he concedes that Lenartovitch would fight bravely in a civil war. But why? Because his cause is just? Because he loathes oppression? No. Because the class enemy can be legitimately hated. Patriots fight for love of country, communists for hatred of the foe (as if the class enemy did its own fighting!)

The WF review see in "August 1914" 'a social system marching to its doom'. All we see is a Russian Army marching to defeat, described with the detailed accuracy of a railway timetable. There is hardly any sign of a social system, nor of the organic connections between the ranks of the army and the ranks of society.



What we perceive is not the collapse of a social system but the genesis of a historic sin. Why did Stalin happen? Because Lenin happened. Why? Because of Tsarist bluntness. Why the war? Because of MILITARY REALITIES, which none but the Closed Fraternity understood. These realities are there because they are there. Now if only the Tsar had appointed experienced generals and administrators who could pass their exams ... If only the Tsar could have been removed by the Closed Fraternity. If only the Church had given a lead ... Later volumes will be a cadet fantasy of the might-have-been.

Of course an author believing such rubbish might yet produce a true work. Many great writers have false politics.

'A literary work is truthful or artistic when the inter-relations of the heroes develop not according to the author's desires but according to the latent forces of the character and the setting. Scientific knowledge differs greatly from the artistic. But the two have some traits in common, defined by the dependence of the description on the things described. A historic work is scientific when facts combine into one whole process which, as in life, moves according to its own internal laws'.

(Trotsky - What is Objectivity?)

Our judgement on Solzhenitsyn was based on the novels and formed long before the appearance of his 'Letter to the Soviet Rulers' in the "Sunday Times" 3rd March, 1974. The content of that letter, disturbing even to the reactionary Sakharov, are beyond analysis or parody. (Stalin let internationalism over-ride the national interest ... lost good neighbour Chiang ... China's population ... pollution ...) Tolstoy's crankiest pamphlets are a homage to rationality - he feels obliged to prove his case - and if you read, say, his piece on Shakespeare you are nearly convinced that Lear is a worthless play. At his most reactionary he is a generous utopian, devoid of vulgar chauvinism. Can one imagine Tolstoy seeing World War I as a Russian tragedy? Regarding the Vietnamese as brain-washed fanatics who don't know when they are beaten? Nevertheless, though they esteemed his art, the Bolsheviks denounced what was reactionary in his pamphlets. Solzhenitsyn's letter was only less disgusting than the WF silence which has followed it. No doubt someone is engaged on the necessary careful research for a review of "Gulag Archipelago", praised by WF for its exposure of Stalin's camps. No doubt. But the open letter required not research but immediate response. Does WF credit the Kremlin with 'strict adherence to Marxist-Leninism'? Do they have an opinion about 'Lenin's' camps? Do they think workers will know 'from their own experience' what is false in Solzhenitsyn's novels? When Marx said 'only the best is good enough for the working class' he did not mean printing technique: he meant scholarship and science. The journals of the party are vehicles of Marxist scholarship and science. A review of "August 1914" which fails to expose its anti-communism plays a trick on the working class. Failure to review "Gulag Archipelago" adequately is also a trick against the working class. Failure to denounce Solzhenitsyn's letter is failure to defend the Soviet Union. This failure is in part a refusal to confess error - if Solzhenitsyn is 'following in Trotsky's footsteps' how can he be stamping on the October Revolution? - and in part an expression of the WF's notorious and thoroughly British anti-intellectualism. 'An hour in the library is an hour to the Tories' (WRP activist). Theory is superfluous to an activism that is born of guilt and sustained by panic. The sectarian activist would rather accuse than analyse. A debate on the level of programme

and policy disturbs the security of his zeal; he must restore it to the ad hominem level. One more push and the stone will move! - well it would have moved if the miserable bookworms had pulled their weight.

Mistrusting the rebellious self-activity of the masses Solzhenitsyn must align himself with imperialism. Like the bureaucracy he is willing to 'liberalise' management and make economic concessions to the peasantry, that is to say, to its petty bourgeois interests and tendencies. Like the Bureaucracy he fears concessions to the political interest of the proletarian vanguard. But the Bureaucracy will fight capitalist restoration at a given point and by its own reactionary methods. 'Ethical Socialism' abhors Hammon; but it rises above the sordid economic realities of this earth.

Middle class radicalism fuses the ideals of classical liberalism with romantic conceptions of socialist revolution. Stalinism in the USSR outrages liberalism; Stalinism in the West offends by having too reformist a character. So support for Solzhenitsyn, the anti-communist darling of imperialism goes with failure to support the Stalinist McGakay when hounded by the millionaire press. These errors are not errors of emphasis or style. They result from a fundamental misappreciation of the bureaucracies which in turn will result in grave errors of practical strategy. At root it is the question of the united front.

Sooner or later Solzhenitsyn will surely attack Trotsky, the arch internationalist, the historian not of Russia downcast but of revolution betrayed. In later novels Kronstadt will surely ride again. Perhaps not until then will the WP have a hard word to say.

A TRAVESTY OF REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY by Cde. Betty Hamilton

A Personal Introduction

Although in the past few years I have not carried out Central Committee or branch duties because I have been handicapped by my husband having a stroke and my own health and age (70 years), as a national member of the movement I have carried out special tasks, raising funds to make possible the Workers' Press. I also carried out international work and had weekly discussions with the General Secretary,

In 1971, after the split with the CCI I made a simple statement of disagreement with this action. Since then I have remained as a member and had regular discussions with Mike Panda to whom I told of my intention to write a document on my political positions, well known to him. He has recently acquainted me with a 'bulletin' criticizing the WRE from a fraternal viewpoint, which I subsequently received. I agree with most criticisms in that bulletin, although I am not associated with its production directly. I carried on writing a document on the problems of building a revolutionary party in Britain, i.e. why we must re-enter the Labour Party.

I speak with some authority on this subject. When I came to this country in 1929, already an old Communist Party member in France, I did not join the CPGB, not just because I had already been in disagreement with the Comintern line since 1927, but because Lenin's appreciation of the tasks of communists in Britain in 'Left Wing Communism' seemed to me to be correct. I joined the Labour Party where I already had gained support when I joined first the 'Marxist Group', which I left for the 'Militant' group, (later the RCL), because it was applying the entry tactic correctly. In 1938 a number of us split to form the Workers International League. It remained in the Labour Party until 1941, but in 1940 I put forward the tactic of getting out of the Labour Party whose wards and committees had given up functioning because of the war. I wanted the movement to go into industry so that we could develop work in the trade unions.

For this I was expelled, for having supposed to have formed a fraction with the ultra-left Cehlerites. I argued for a sharp turn away from the dead Labour Party and into the trade unions in the Internal Bulletin, where I dealt with the question of entry, not as a principle or fetish, but as a tactic. On that occasion I was against entry, and I think I was proved correct later. At the same time I remained opposed to the ultra-lefts who as I put it then, believed 'it is time to come out as an open party or group ...' I worked in a factory where I became a shop steward and organised several thousand women into the union until I was victimised by the management. I had meanwhile been re-admitted to the WIL in 1943 and became the organiser for Yorkshire and the Midlands, and later was a member of the CC.

From 1943 I agitated for the return into the Labour Party and built a faction to achieve this. This became part of the RCF minority which entered the Labour Party and came out of it in 1964 as the OLL.

Despite reservations about the way in which the exit from the Labour Party was carried out, I undertook several important tasks for the movement. In addition to assisting with running the

finance of the SLL I audited the movement's accounts and continued in international work. I attended the founding conference of the WRF even though I had and still have deep disagreements as to the wisdom of this step. During the recent election campaign, Cde. Banda visited me and asked me for a donation to the WRF's election fund. I gave him £200 on the understanding that it would not be put into that fund, as I was opposed to the way the WRF candidates were run.

My serious disagreements date back to 1970 on the International questions. I raised at that time the fact that Cde. Mealy was very impressed with Christopher Hill's book on Cromwell and as a result produced the 'Charter of Basic Rights'. I consider this to have been based on a wrong understanding of the relationship between the bourgeois Cromwellian revolution and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. The Charter of Basic Rights is in fact a combination of minimum demands and the maximum programme (full nationalisation), and now the programme of Transitional Demands which Trotsky says will serve as the bridge between the struggles and partial demands of the present is being abandoned.

In the same year at a meeting of the International Committee pre-conference which was to discuss a resolution on the United Front put forward by the COI, I was deeply concerned by the then SLL leaders changing the discussion into a totally abstract one on 'Marxist philosophy'. These differences deepened and took on a new dimension following the Bolivian coup in August 1971. With the fore knowledge of G. Mealy, Wohlforth wrote and published an open attack on the ICR for allegedly betraying the Bolivian working class. He did not, as a communist internationalist must do, direct his main attack against his own bourgeoisie, which through the CIA engineered the counter-revolution in Bolivia.

Then followed the split with the COI, which in my opinion was a cover-up operation to avoid discussion. I enclose the correspondence (see page 12) which ensued after the splitting of the IC by the SLL leadership.

Right up until the London Area Conference of 5th May, 1974, I was given no indication that I was anything but a full member of the WRF, whose founding conference I had attended, after the ticket had been personally brought round to my house by Cde. Banda. Certainly I have found it difficult to attend meetings and rallies regularly. This was because I have to be with my husband all the time, which I suppose is why Cde. Banda visited me regularly. Cde. Banda told me only a month ago that he would be round to see me soon, but he never came. Why then should I believe that I had been suspended or expelled from the Party between the time I last spoke to Mike Banda and the time I went to the Area Conference? When, where and by whom are these things supposed to have been done. Is it true that after 40 years in the Trotskyist movement I can have been expelled without even a written note? Of course I know this can't be so.

These incidents are almost unique in the history of the British Trotskyist movement. I did not experience such things even during the faction fight in the French Stalinist movement in 1927 to 1929 when the PCF apparatus resorted to gangster tactics to suppress critics within the party. We know what Lenin and Trotsky would have said about such methods of 'debate' for it is clear in their writings. In 1932 after the French Stalinists had attacked Trotskyist militants at a meeting Trotsky wrote :

BULL  
A TR  
(Err  
'Th

I at  
was  
brou  
by s  
wife  
hall  
husb  
acco  
that  
hesi  
alth  
I wa  
knew  
Febr  
for  
Aile  
that  
it w  
symp  
dec  
Cont

I th  
in t  
that  
some  
of a  
cont  
publ  
'Jer  
But  
mana  
Heal  
and  
the  
move  
come  
beca  
the  
more  
whic  
that  
'bu  
thro  
(eve  
spok  
grou  
perk  
as r  
bull

A TRAVESTY OF REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY

(Errata, Insert P.10 BEFORE LAST PARAGRAPH after 'be so' and before 'These incidents')

I attended the London Area Conference with full membership rights and was admitted by Comrade Sylveire at the door even though I had not brought my membership card with me, I was greeted in a friendly way by several leading Party members, amongst them Roy Dattersby and his wife, Cyril Smith and Nickie Shaw. I took a seat at the back of the hall because I knew I would have to leave early and return to my husband. Some minutes later I was 'challenged' by cde. Torrance, accompanied by Roger Smith, who I took to be a steward. She alleged that I had no right to be at the meeting. When asked why not, she hesitated, and then said it was because I had not paid my subs. (which although not true at least shows that at some point I was a member). I was amazed at this and pointed out to her that she above all people knew how much money I had put into the movement, and that only in February I had given £200 to Mike Banda as well as having an order for £16 a month. Cde. Torrance seemed at this point to be lost. Then Aileen Jennings who knows me very well asked me to leave on the grounds that I was 'only a sympathiser', a ruling which I could not accept, since it was unconstitutional to say the least. Comrades can only be made sympathisers after a decision of the Central Committee and if such a decision had been taken in my case I would have appealed to the Control Commission. No such procedure has taken place.

I then asked to see cde. Banda who is fully acquainted with my status in the movement, but before I could do so, and after the suspicion that I was being 'quietly' tricked into the street, I saw G. Healy up some steps in the foyer. I went up to him, expecting an explanation of all this extraordinary behaviour. He though immediately lost all control and called me a 'French spy' and an 'agent' of the group publishing the bulletin, to use his own words, a 'Blickite' and a 'Jenkinsite'. He called on stewards to 'throw that woman out' (sic)! But to their credit not one would do so. Cyril Smith who had earlier managed to smile now put on a display of hatred and rage in front of Healy who repeated the charge that I was not a member of the WRF and kept shouting that I should be thrown out physically. Having seen the man raging like that for the past thirty or so years I was not moved. Finally I left the hall with cde. Banda who had meanwhile come in and been called by Healy to 'deal' with me. Outside things became even more worrying. Two other young comrades were receiving the same treatment at the hands of Healy and his 'bouncers' who were more active this time because the comrades were young. Their crime, which I subsequently learned from talking to them in the street, was that one of them had been seen talking to an alleged supporter of the 'bulletin group' at the place where they both work. His wife was thrown out on the 'grounds' that she intended to speak in the meeting (even the Stalinists in my time did not attack people before they had spoken up), and must therefore also be an 'agent' of the bulletin group. For this they were both thrown out of the meeting and perhaps even 'deprived' of membership in the Party in the same way as me. When I asked them in fact if they were supporters of the bulletin they told me ... no!

'This is not the work of rank and file communists, of workers - they would never lower themselves to such abominations! - but of a centralised bureaucracy which is carrying out the orders of the higher echelons. Their aim: to create such an embittered atmosphere within the communist ranks that all arguments of reason lose their force. Only in this way can the Stalinist bureaucracy still save itself from the criticism of the Left Opposition. What terrible degeneration! The history of the Russian revolutionary movement is particularly rich in bitter factional struggles. For 35 years I have observed very closely and participated in this struggle. I can't recall a single instance in which differences of opinion, not only among the Marxists, but between the Marxists and the Narodniks and the anarchists, were settled by the organised rule of the fist ... I can't recall a single meeting (in 1917) where physical fights replaced political struggle ... I have not been able to find a single indication of such an occurrence in the press of the time. What the proletarian masses wanted to do was to listen and to understand. What the Bolsheviks wanted to do was to convince them. Only in this way can a party be educated and the revolutionary class be drawn to it ...'

(L. Trotsky. Intensify the Offensive  
August 6th, 1932. Writings of L. Trotsky  
1932, pp.166/167, Emphasis added)

Those members of the WRF who indulge in or condone in any way hooliganism in the workers' movement, above all in the Party which wants to be its vanguard, should hang their heads in shame when they see these lines. Are you going to permit this movement to be lowered by those who use methods which in earlier times were used by the Stalinists to hound and silence the comrades of our movement? I am raising this matter inside the movement in relation to Party democracy. Those who use threats and violence to exclude comrades like me and like the young ones also turned out at the Area Conference must be frightened people. Why can't they give me the right to stand up in a meeting of the movement to which I have given my entire adult life and simply speak for my declared positions? What is to be feared from such a thing?

Although I was excluded from the meeting I know that other people are beginning to ask questions of the leadership, especially over the Cowley trouble. It is obvious from the press that Cde. Thornett and through him the WRF has suffered a massive setback in Oxford. Some sort of coverup job is going on inside the movement. Those trade unionists who spoke up in the meeting against Healy have no connection with me, I had no part in the formation of the comrades who started to produce the 'bulletin'. Why all the criticism from different sources?

I consider myself a party member still, as indeed I am, according to the constitution if not the leadership, and will continue to fight for my full rights and those of all members to disagree with the line of the leadership and to form a faction if necessary. The Healy leadership is increasingly turning its back on the organised workers in the Labour Party and consequently making mistakes in the trade unions like at Cowley. I don't want to see our movement, my movement destroyed by all this. A fight is necessary now to prevent more Cowleys in the future. I understand that Cde. Wanda intends, with the help of other ~~leaders~~ ~~to~~ ~~stand~~ all minorities' because he believes in the 'dictatorship' of the

Party. In all my years of reading Marxist literature I have never seen this term, it exists only in Stalinism. Had such a policy been successful in the past there would have been no Russian Revolution no Communist International, no Left Opposition, no Fourth International and no WRF. Without the clash of tendencies and ideas within the party, as sharply as is needed Marxism would never have been developed. Fight comrades for your democratic rights as party members, fight for those of all Party members. The struggle must be waged with the methods of discussion, not with those of Stalinism. Let us have a full discussion of the crisis in our movement.

-----

Godstone, 23rd October 1971

Dear Comrade,

In relation to our last meeting on 20th September, 1971, I confirm my intention to defend my position inside my organisation - the Socialist Labour League - and request its Central Committee to establish provisions which will allow me to put forward my political point of view in front of all members of the S.L.L. and of all other international organisations which are affiliated to the International Committee.

Yours fraternally,

Betty Hamilton

G. Kealy,  
National Secretary,  
Socialist Labour League.

-----

Socialist Labour League  
London S.W.4.  
27th October, 1971

Dear Comrade,

Your letter of 23rd October has been passed to the London Area Committee for attention.

The London Area Committee is discussing the situation on the International Committee next Sunday, 31st October at the centre (above address) at 10.00 a.m. Will you please arrange to attend.

Enclosed are some documents to your information.

Yours fraternally,

Dany Sylveire  
Secretary of the London Area  
Committee

Betty Hamilton,  
[REDACTED]

London, S.W.1.

THE CASSIDY AFFAIR

The following documents pertain to the slanders published by WE in its issue of 23rd May, 1974, namely that Tom Hillier, a supporter of the Bulletin and former leading ULL industrial comrade, actively engaged in strike-breaking on 8th May, 1974, the day of the AEUW's official strike against the NERC's sequestration order. First we reproduce Tom Hillier's Open Letter, which at the time of publication, none of the five left-wing papers it was sent to have seen fit to publish, despite the fact that slanders of a most scurrilous kind were being levelled at a long-standing trade union militant. There then follow documents testifying to the real actions of Hillier and Cassidy on the day in question. Our readers are left to draw their own conclusions as to who did the most to secure united action of the CA/ workers in response to the AEUW's strike order ( an order which, incidentally, WE only the previous day had declared to be out of the question!) Perhaps now Cassidy and those who are manipulating him and exploiting his loyalty to the WER will accuse us of using the 'corporatist' bureaucracy of the AEUW to attack the WER. The only problem is, this was an official strike, called by the very union whose officials and bodies have upheld the action of Comrade Hillier!

.....

This Open Letter is in answer to the slanderous attack made on Brother Tom Hillier AEUW Shop Steward, Confederation Shop Steward (Secretary CA/ Acton Joint Shop Stewards Committee) in Workers Press (Daily Organ of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party) by one of its members, John Cassidy in the paper's issue of 23rd May, 1974. Copies of this letter have been sent to Workers' Press, Socialist Worker, Red Weekly, Militant and Tribune. Despite our deep-going political differences with the last four publications we, the editors of the Bulletin (a tendency publication within the WER) have taken this step, firstly because the leaders of the WER have themselves chosen to make our differences public, in a series of articles flagrantly distorting our real positions; and secondly because from previous experiences of sending letters to WE for publication we feel that the paper's editors may well deny us the right to reply to their attacks (a facility which they have extended to, amongst others, Monty Johnstone of the CPGB, who entered the Revolutionary Communist Party from the YCL as a Stalinist agent in the Trotskyist movement.) We therefore request publication of this letter together with this introduction, as an elementary right of a trade union militant to clear his name of charges which if permitted to pass unchallenged will slur him in the estimation of class conscious workers.

In directing his reply to John Cassidy, Brother Hillier is fully aware that the real author of his slanders hides behind a young worker who can, if needs be, be sacrificed in the interests of preserving the WER apparatus and discrediting those who are seeking to develop a genuine Trotskyist alternative to the sectarian-opportunist policies of the WER leadership.

The Editors of the Bulletin



.....

An Open Letter to John Cassidy,

You have seen fit to write a letter to Workers Press which was published on Thursday 23rd May. In this letter you accuse me personally of strike breaking and of giving no lead to the membership in CA7 (Acton). Now these are serious charges which I sincerely trust as a good trade unionist and principled Marxist you will not confine to the WRF. You are no doubt aware that our union the AEUW, shares common membership at CA7 with other trade unions - namely the GSWU, the CNU, the TCU and EBITU. You should also be aware that the workers at CA7 have for decades supported a Joint Shop Stewards Committee of which I am the Secretary. There is no separate committee for individual unions on the Acton site. On the morning of 8th May all AEUW militants and class conscious workers knew via the press, radio and TV, that the AEUW had instructed members to cease work. Of course, it would be ideal to suppose that shop stewards could complacently believe that 1.25 million members would go on immediate strike as soon as they heard the news. Unfortunately reality is somewhat different. You must be aware that the trade union movement is not a disciplined body that obeys orders issued by the leadership without question. So one could simply stay at home trusting that the rest of the membership would do likewise. No responsible trade union member would follow such a course.

Neither is it correct that an unofficial improvised picket composed of a dozen or so militant AEUW members should present themselves at the 20-odd gates at the CA7 plant in order to stop AEUW members from entering the plant. The course could only be the one adopted - that is, to fight for the support of the AEUW stewards first and then to win the stewards of the other unions to respect the picket lines. The factory membership had its Joint Shop Stewards Committee which it recognises. It takes heed of no other organisation in the plant.

Your letter suggests nothing else but individual action, abandoning not only 90% of the AEUW members but also, 1,000 members of the other trade unions represented on the JSSC. It is a pity that you could not identify the shops where the militants went home or stayed away since this would have been amply borne out by my contention that individual action, whilst it salves the middle class conscience, doesn't achieve mass support, which has to be fought for on grounds which are not of our or the WRF's choosing. You will notice that I have emphasised the word 'suggests'. I'm sure that you recognise the significance of that. You appear to be unconvinced of the need to win the bulk of the membership to support the strike - yet for one so sure that my action on 8th May constituted 'strike breaking' you have a curious way of conducting yourself. Let me expand a little. You not only entered the factory on 8th May, but you attempted to do the very thing which I explained the leadership of the JSSC were about to do at a shop stewards meeting to be held at 9.00 a.m. - namely to try to win support for the strike. You clocked-in and were in my department at 8.15 a.m. I have witnesses to this fact. Furthermore, work was not being performed. You arrived just as a meeting had finished. You know this to be the case. So because you entered the factory and failed to influence anyone in your section, you walked out. You in fact abdicated leadership just when it was most called for. Because I remained in order to attend the JSSC at 9.00 a.m. I am labelled a strike-breaker! During the course of the meeting the shop stewards agreed to support the AEUW strike - including shop stewards belonging to other unions. Pickets would be at the gates the next morning and all trade unionists would be called upon not to break them. There were

several reasons why the stewards did not support an immediate stoppage, not least being the problem of the night shift members. Also of course, although you did not mention this, being more concerned with 'principles' that left the vast majority of workers at work and a tiny handful at home, the committee wanted a united strike of all the work force. Remember this was an indefinite strike, and it was vital to achieve maximum unity from the very start. But your 'principled approach' - i.e. entering the factory in the morning - wasn't your only appearance inside the factory was it Brother Cassidy? Although you say nothing about this aspect of your exploits on 8th May (not 7th May as you wrongly state in your letter) I must point out that you entered the plant again in the afternoon. Because you wanted to be elected a shop steward of a department that had blacklegged during the three-day week, did you not Brother Cassidy? So conveniently forgetting the principles you accuse me of breaking you entered the factory at 1.00 p.m. precisely, and on your request, I summoned a meeting of the department's members (against the wishes of the Superintendent, Mr. Friars). But not once in the course of this meeting, which provided you with the perfect opportunity to make public your 'principles' before an audience of CAV workers, and win support for the strike, did you say that these workers should not be in the plant. How could you - you were there yourself, in pursuit of a shop stewards post. One might well ask why it was necessary to hold the election for this post on 8th May of all days, when on your own testimony all workers should have been outside the plant gates. You only left the plant again following your failure to secure election to the steward's position. You then stalked off, but once again, you did nothing, so far as I have been able to ascertain, to win support in the plant for strike action. One can understand your reticence on this episode.

Brother Cassidy, you have unwisely in my opinion allowed yourself to be used in a political faction fight for which you are singularly ill-prepared. No doubt you will soon realise this, I hope so anyway, for your own sake. You cannot claim that entering the CAV plant in order to win support for strike action was 'strike-breaking' when you yourself did precisely this. Are there then different rules for IRA members supporting the Nealy-Banda line? If you take the view that no one should enter the plant but instantly form a picket, why did you enter the plant not once (as you claim) but twice? Why, when I 'failed' to give a lead did you not attempt to organise a picket line? After all you claim militants were walking out - why didn't you a member of the IRA and AEUJA organise them yourself?

What really happened is that you entered the plant, panicked, and then walked out. Then you hung around outside, 'leading' the struggle that was going on inside to win workers for strike action presumably - and finally you repeated the exercise by going in again in order to attend an election in your department which you yourself had requested. All these facts can and will be established I can assure you Brother Cassidy. In order that I, as JSCC Secretary could officiate at this election, I would have to enter the plant! Brother Arthur Mason was present when we met and you said you had been waiting for me to go to unit 5. Do you deny this? You made no mention of the strike then since your mind was clearly focused on obtaining the shop stewards position. You may also remember that before the election took place we both saw John Farman (CAV AEUJ Convenor) who asked me to handle the election - do you now deny this Brother Cassidy? Did you even mention the national strike? Of course you did not!

Why do you hesitate to complain to the JSSC about my conduct on 8th May? I now challenge you to charge me under rule via the Branch Committee, the District Committee, Executive Committee and CSEU (No. 8 District Committee). If not, you must apologise and retract your slanderous attack in Workers Press which saw fit to retail these lies in the first place. Failing which, I will take action against you. I am proposing to have you branched as per rule in two weeks' time. I advise you to consider your course of action carefully, and not to heed the 'advice' (possibly a stronger word is more appropriate here) of those who are seeking to use you in their squalid manoeuvres.

Tom Millier  
24th May, 1974.

.....  
To Whom It May Concern

Subject 8th May 1974

Bro. T. Millier Secretary of the CAV (Acton) Joint Stewards Committee played an active part in pursuing a policy of joint action in relation to the AUEW strike call on 8th May 1974, The policy was in line with CAV's tradition of maximum unity of the trade union membership.

John Kerr  
Senior Steward TGWU  
CAV Action JSS Committee

.....  
(From) Amalgamated Union of  
Engineering Workers  
(Engineering Section)

London North  
District Secretary  
V.W. Swift.

Cur Ref: VC/JS

28 Denmark Street, WC2.

(To)  
Mr. Tom Millier  
[Redacted]  
Heasden, H.W.10.

6th June 1974.  
C.A.W. Acton

Dear Sir & Brother,

Whilst understanding your anger over what is a series of serious charges made against you in a public newspaper, after discussion with the General Purposes Committee, the opinion is that this item is outside the purview of District Committee control.

Nevertheless, I want to assure you that the District Committee were well aware of the work Brother Farman and yourself were doing in attempting to bring out members of all unions.

Yours fraternally

V. Swift  
District Secretary.

.....

28th May 1974

I wish to confirm that on Wednesday 8th May, 1974 Prother John Cassidy was in the CAV Acton plant, he came into 178 Dept to see Bro. Hillier at approx. 8.20 a.m.

James White  
GPOU Group Steward 27 Dept  
Baling Branch

I was present in 178 Dept at the above mentioned time and confirm that the statement above is correct.

Norman Reynolds  
Assembly workers 21 Dept.

.....  
Wednesday 8th May 1974

WE THE UNDERSIGNED CAN CONFIRM THAT JOE CASSIDY WAS PRESENT WITHIN THE UNIT 5 FACTORY, C.A.V. ACTON, AT AN ELECTION MEETING. BRO. T. HILLIER SEC. J.S.S COMMITTEE PARTICIPATED AT THE ELECTION WHICH TOOK PLACE AT APPROXIMATELY 1.15 p.m. WEDNESDAY 8th MAY

MEMBERS OF THE STORE, UNIT 5.

Signed by all members of Cassidy's section including his Shop Steward.

.....  
S.E.18

To the Editor of Workers Press.

Dear Sirs,

I was astonished to see an attack in the 'Workers Press' on Tom Hillier by J. Cassidy. It is so far out of this world that the whole credibility of the paper is in question which is a pity since many people at C.A.V. have been pleased to see fairly accurate reporting of events in the factory in the past. The strike call by Bro. Scanlon became public through TV but took about 24 hours to get down through the official (accepted) channels of communication to the membership. In the interval some members did one thing, others something different. At a meeting of the full Joint Stewards Committee at 9.00 a.m. on the 8th May, a decision was taken by stewards of all unions to call for a close down of the whole site at the end of the day. Not a bad response to a call to strike 'forthwith'! After all, it might have been a long struggle.

At midday I was talking to Tom Hillier in the street, when J. Cassidy approached and asked Tom to go into his department at

the start of the afternoon shift to help elect a shop steward, Cassidy accompanied Tom. Incidentally, the membership did not even nominate Cassidy. No protest about Hillier's alleged conduct was made by Cassidy at this time.

The inferences drawn that Hillier's actions were part of some diabolical plan are nonsense! Most of the other stewards were in exactly the same position and Cassidy himself clocked in on the morning shift. It is a pity that this young enthusiastic but inexperienced young comrade cannot be more truthful and objective. He might then be able to play a more useful part in the working class.

Yours sincerely,

A. D. Mason  
(AUEW Shop Steward)

.....  
To: North London District Committee, AEUW

As a result of the sequestration order placed on our Union (AUEW) the North London District Committee circularised all Conveners to attend a meeting on Wednesday May 8th at 2.30 p.m. in order to discuss the issue and reach agreement on action in support of defending the Union funds.

It so happened that during the afternoon of Tuesday May 7th, the Executive Council issued instructions verbally through Pro. Hugh Scanlon to all members for a stoppage of work forthwith. Rumours ran through the factory which were of a conflicting nature, and as a result it was not until that evening when I, as Convener, received confirmation, and only then through the medium of T.V. No written or telephone instructions followed. In these circumstances everybody reported for work the following day (Wed. 8th May). My first thought was to call our Joint Shop Stewards E.C. together and confer with them on the current situation where it was agreed to call an immediate meeting of the full Joint Shop Stewards Committee to formulate a policy for action and attempt to maintain unity with all Unions as in the past. At this summons meeting a good deal of discussion took place and several points of view were put forward with regard to a total stoppage of all Unions plus picketing problems etc. The agreement arising from this meeting was as follows, (1) The Convener (myself) should attend the meeting at District Office that same day at 2.30 p.m. in order to make a report and seek further information. (2) All manual workers would cease work at 4.30 p.m. including all unions. (3) The gates would be picketed the following morning. (4) All departments would stop work at 11.00 a.m. after this Shop Stewards meeting and inform everyone of our decision and ask for picket volunteers. (5) AUEW Shop Stewards would make it clear to their members that this is a directive from our Head Office. Stewards of all other Unions would instruct their members that the picket line must not be crossed.

Between 1.00 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. I was approached by Pro. Cassidy of Unit 5 in company with Pro. Hillier, reference an election for Shop Steward in Pro. Cassidy's department. As I wanted to get off to District Office I asked Pro. Hillier if he would attend to the matter and he agreed to do so, which satisfied Pro. Cassidy. No mention was made of the current situation at this encounter.

I attended the meeting at District Office and gave my report as outlined above which was accepted without undue criticism. I added

the point that I could have insisted on all AUEW members leaving the site during the early part of the morning but decided to act jointly as we do on all things, so far successfully. The meeting accepted the difficulties in a joint working factory such as this.

J. Paxman  
AUEW Convener

## THE HUNTER AFFAIR

Present at the meeting referred to in the following letter and statement was not only Paddy O'Regan, a WRE member of some 15 years standing, but also Bill Hunter, a member of the Trotskyist movement since the early 1940's.

Hunter knows better than almost anyone else how vital it is for the working class movement to defend the democratic rights of minorities within it, since he no doubt recalls the time when the Trotskyist movement had to physically fight for those rights against the Stalinists.

When O'Regan physically prevented Jean Faugier from entering the meeting, she appealed to Bill Hunter to intercede on her behalf. He came from the speakers platform to the door but when ordered back into the hall by O'Regan he tamely submitted to this instruction. This is why this outrageous incident merits the title 'The Hunter Affair'.

To: Workers Press

Rainhill Nurses Branch  
National Union of Public  
Employees,  
Rainhill Hospital,  
Rainhill, Nr. Liverpool.

The Editor,

This branch of the National Union of Public Employees was approached via the branch secretary to provide a speaker to address a WRF public meeting in St. Helens on 20th May, 1974, on the current and very important struggle of nurses.

The question of a speaker was brought up at a meeting of the Merseyside Nurses Action Group, and it was democratically decided that we should delegate Jean Faugier, our Trades Council delegate and a leading member of the action group. This person has been good enough to speak on the question of the nurses struggle, not only on local radio, but also to thousands of nurses at rallies both in Liverpool and in Manchester.

However, it would appear that our delegate was not good enough to address a WRF public meeting of approximately eight people. Not only was our speaker stopped from entering the meeting and speaking on behalf of the Merseyside action group, but her way into the room was physically barred by two members of the WRF. People in the meeting were instructed not to speak to her, and when eventually one person who had managed to get into the meeting brought up the question of why our delegate was still being refused the permission to speak on behalf of the Nurses he received no satisfactory answer and left the meeting in disgust. This person was by the way, a member of the Communist Party and before he left he signed a statement concerning the facts mentioned above.

It would seem to us that this sort of method has no place in the British Trade Union and Labour movement, and is the complete opposite of workers' democracy which workers all over the world have been and still are fighting for. We as a branch of the Trade Union movement in this country demand a public explanation and apology in the Workers Press. And we further demand that the WRF re-convene a further public meeting where our delegate can speak.

If we receive no satisfaction on what we feel to be a principled issue of great importance we intend to draw this despicable act to the attention of the whole Trade Union movement on Merseyside.

Yours Fraternally,

Branch Secretary,  
Branch Chairman.



"I, Kevin Allender, member of the QMWU, St. Helens Branch, declare that, I went along to a public meeting, called by the WRF at St. Helens Town Hall on May 20th, 1974, 7.30 p.m.

When I arrived at the door of the hall in which the meeting was to take place, I found there two leading members of the WRF, Paddy O' Regan and Ray Hudson, standing outside the door, physically preventing Regis Fougier, teacher, member of the NUT, and Jean Fougier, nurse, member of NUFFE and leading member of the Merseyside nurses action group, who had officially been invited to the WRF meeting to speak on behalf of that group, from entering the hall and attending the meeting. The two WRF leading members said that they refused to discuss the reason of their attitude.

I bear witness that all these facts are true, and that I tried my best to get those two comrades into the meeting but did not succeed. I wish to wage a very strong protest against such methods.

K. Allender  
(Member of the CP)

Off

On  
pla  
the  
we  
of  
di  
me  
a  
fo  
th  
of  
fa  
fr  
th  
In  
wa  
wa  
in

W  
S  
d  
d

T

I  
h  
i  
a  
v  
i

THE WEST LONDON "COUNCIL OF ACTION"

Officers without an army

On the evening of 24th May in West London the inaugural meeting took place of a self-styled 'Council of Action'. Around 80 people came to the meeting, seemingly an impressive number. In fact these people were largely there as individuals, only one person spoke in the name of a trade union branch or factory, Cde. Hankey, who led off the discussion. Apparently the call for the meeting had come from a mass meeting of his own small plant, Power Jacks. No mention was made of a prior campaign for support from the workers' movement, no proposals for action were circulated before the night. During the course of the meeting it became clear who and was represented by this 'Council of Action'. Four people present admitted membership of the Labour Party, two of these walked out soon after the start. Two more came from the IMG, they too walked out during the discussion. Out of thirteen speakers, two represented an LEYS branch, one the West London IMG, one a branch of the ATUA, the other nine were WRE members. It was clear what the 'Council' was - another name for the WRE. So vague was its basis that outside the WRE not a single person knew what was involved.

Not one of the important factories in West London, not a single bus garage, train depot, London Airport or office had send a mandated delegate to speak. The workers' movement in its unions, parties and diverse opinions was absent.

The WRE School of Justification

In the leading contribution Cde. Hankey tried very hard to make a historical case for the 'Council of Action'. Pointing out how such institutions were supposed to have existed before, notably in 1921 and during the General Strike, he drew a remarkable picture of the working class being impelled involuntarily by the crisis of capitalism, into a break with the Labour Party and a turn to such things as this 'Council of Action'. The 'Council' was to become the new leadership by dint of the crisis itself: where else could the workers go? To make things clearer Cde. Hankey moved the main resolution, which reads:

"The first three months of the minority Labour Government have been dominated by a rapid worsening of the world economic crisis.

"The CBI has been warned that since the end of the three day working, investment has been nil and production has been running at only 50% of capacity. Now, according to Campbell Adamson, the CBI Director General, inflation is threatening the whole 'social fabric' of capitalism. Major sections of industry are threatened with closure, such as Concorde, and there have been millions of pounds wiped off the value of shares and a slump in the property market. Mass unemployment faces the working class. Inflationary price rises have continued and there has been a 25 to 30% increase in the cost of basic items such as food and rates, all workers face enormous rises in electricity charges at the end of the summer.

"This situation has brought thousands of low paid workers into the wages battle, many sections are involved who have never taken strike action before, NALGO workers, in London, nurses and many other sections of the working class.

"The Labour Government however has held onto Phase Three of the Pay Laws and has refused to meet the strikers' demands. They have been

assisted all down the line by the TUC and trade union leaders. The Industrial Relations Act is still on the statute books and the Labour Government stood by and allowed the NIRC to find the engineers £65,000. It was only the mass action of the AUEW members out on an indefinite strike which forced the court to accept the money put up by a group of business men. The strike directly challenged the state and its court and showed the way forward for the whole of the working class. The working class must never be subordinated to the right wing Labour Government and trade union leaders. We must fight for all-out official strike action, for the scrapping of the wage-cutting 'social contract' deal between the TUC and Labour Government. Closures of factories and redundancies must be met with factory occupations.

"We believe that this Labour Government must be exposed in its role of carrying out Tory policy. An emergency conference of the Labour Party must be called where the working class can demand that the Tory anti-working class laws must be repealed, the Shrewsbury 6 building workers must be released from jail, and a programme of nationalisation of the basic industries, including food, the banks, and land, under workers' control and without compensation to the old owners, must be immediately implemented as the only way to resolve the crisis of capitalism in the interests of the working class.

"If the minority Labour Government were defeated by the Tories and Liberals in Parliament while fighting for this programme they would be able to go to the country and win massive support from the working class and be returned to power. If they refuse to carry out such a programme they will stand exposed.

"This Council of Action will fight for this perspective in the West London Area and will unite all sections of the working class, the trade unions and the Labour movement, to defend their basic rights, their jobs and living standards. We urge all workers to join us, to fight to raise the consciousness of the working class and prepare them to take the power."

Despite its strident tone and the constant use of the imperative 'must' the only call in the whole resolution to action is "An emergency conference of the Labour Party must be called". By whom? Under what procedure? When? Unfortunately these mundane considerations remained unanswered for the duration of the evening save for one WRF speaker who pointed out that as a member of a TU he could 'put pressure on the Labour Party' (sic). Note especially that the 'Council' becomes the agent which "will unite all sections of the working class, the trade unions and the Labour movement" (in the West London Area).

At this point one small problem was raised in the meeting by a member of the LPYS - did the workers already support the WRF and the policies in the resolution? Answer - no! Then, surely what was needed was a policy to unite workers in the course of their real struggles and in their mass organisations, to build an alternative leadership to the reformists and take the struggle against the bosses concrete steps forward? This, Cde. [redacted] pointed out that exposing Wilson-Penn in words was not the task, but to expose them in practice using the yardstick of the needs of the working class, and where possible their own promises to the workers who vote for them. This, he said, could not be done outside of a political fight in the Labour Party, linked to the struggle in the unions. He proposed an amendment which had at its core the 'Transitional Programme of the Fourth International' and the carrying out of which he said would require work in the Labour Party and unions, and the dropping of the idea that the 'Council' was already some new form of leadership in the working class. The amendment was as follows,

Document and Resolution submitted by Southall Labour Party LFYS

"The main lines of this resolution have been drawn from the pamphlet, 'The Death Agony of Capitalism, and the Tasks of the Fourth International'. Southall Labour Party Young Socialists supports this programme and uses it as the main lines of its intervention in the struggle of the working class. Sections quoted from the programme itself, which we feel is the appropriate document for this meeting to discuss, are enclosed in inverted commas, all other material is the work of Southall LFYS.

"THE PROLETARIAT AND ITS LEADERSHIP"

- "The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis, characteristic of a pre-revolutionary state of society. The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership; its petty bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony.
- "In all countries the proletariat is wracked by a deep disquiet. In millions, the masses again and again move onto the road of revolutionary outbreaks. But each time they are blocked by their own conservative apparatus."
- "The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organisations. Of these factors, the first, of course, is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. No matter how the methods of the social-betrayers differ - from the 'social' legislation of Blum to the judicial frame-ups of Stalin - they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat."
- "The strategic task of the next period - a pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organisation - consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation; the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."
- "The strategical task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. The political aim: the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. However, the achievement of this strategic task is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics. All sections of the proletariat, all its layers, professions and groups should be drawn into the revolutionary movement. The present epoch is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution. The Fourth International does not discard the programme of the old 'minimal' demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work

within the frame-work of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism - and this occurs at each step - the Fourth International advances a system of transitional demands, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very basis of the bourgeois regime. The old 'minimal' programme is superseded by the transitional programme, the task of which lies in the systematic mobilisation of the masses for the proletarian revolution".

" In the struggles against the Tory government such as the fight against the Industrial Relations Act and the miners' strike, which led to the defeat of the Tories and the election of a Labour Government, the working class did not have socialism, that is the seizure of state power, as its immediate aim. The working class does not begin from a scientific understanding of its historic aims in formulating its demands. The election of the Labour Government was an attempt to put the party of the working class in the parliament of the ruling class in order to legislate for the workers interests and against those of the bourgeoisie. This contradiction reveals the real problems which face the working class in its attempt to overcome the limitations of a reformist leadership. The turn of the working class to unite as a class and fight the bosses is a turn which is taking place not only in relation to, but also largely through and inside, its mass organisations, the Labour Party and the unions. The revolutionaries must be able to intervene in this process and in these organisations.

" The demands this committee fights for and the form of its organisation must answer the problem of overcoming the contradiction between 'the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard'. To elaborate a programme of demands which expose the reformists and Stalinists means to make these demands an expression of the real movement of the masses, and be able to fight on them in the workers' movement. If the demands which this committee raises do not co-incide with the necessary next step, or stage, in the growth of the class consciousness of the working class, which is not entirely produced by the propaganda activity of the revolutionaries, then they will not essentially expose the way in which the reformists and Stalinists attempt to hold back the working class. In order to bring about a real exposure it is more than necessary to build, step by step, a real leadership which replaces them in all the struggles of the working class, this cannot be done by counterposing at every turn, propagandistically, to the programme of the Labour Party, the need to 'nationalise', 'take power' or any other panacea.

" The call for the 'Emergency Labour Party Conference' to discuss the programme of the seizure of power, which is what the resolution circulated in the call for this committee implies, is only such a propaganda ploy. In fact most of the members of this committee are outside of the Labour Party and in no position to fight for this Conference. Thus we must say that the basis of this 'Council' would then be a 'united front from without' with some mythical rank and file move in the Labour Party and unions to call such a conference. This approach is in marked opposition to that of the Clay Cross Council which has called the conference on June 8th. A conference which is centred on the real next steps in the struggle to push back the effects of the Heath offensive against the workers.

" We do not believe that such a fight around an 'abstract' conference will gain real support among members of the Labour Party or trade unionists, in fact to fight on this position is to immediately cancel

out intervention in all the twists and turns of the development of the working class. It is a classical sectarian approach to the problem of building the alternative leadership, however good are the intentions of the comrades who support it. We urge the members of this 'Council of Action' to re-iterate support for the following demands and to build a base in the local trade unions, Labour Parties and other working class organisations around them:

"Full support for the conference called by Clay Cross on June 8th as part of a campaign to make the Labour Government implement the election programme on which it was returned and the decisions taken by LP Conference ..."

"... definite actions to secure the release of the Shrewsbury 6, which include meetings and propaganda activity aimed at the Labour MP's in this area and also the Home Secretary."

"... work for a full boycott of all trade and work for Chile in the West London Area ..."

At this point all pretence in the meeting to 'unite all sections of the working class' ceased and the sectarian voice of the WRF, whose child the 'Council' was, asserted itself. Speaker after speaker, in the name of the WRF, equated work in the LP with 'covering up for the bureaucracy' (sic). T. Monaghan, a member of the WRF made the unforgettable remark that "This Council of Action is the new leadership of the working class in this area". "It was no matter", he said, "that no factory shop stewards, union branches or constituency Labour Parties were represented, because between 1964 and 1970 the reformists lost their 'political hold' on the working class" (sic). "In West London this had been achieved by measures of rationalisation carried through by Labour, on the bosses' behalf, which had left scars in workers' minds which although hidden, had 'laid the basis for a break with reformism'".

How simple! The reformists expose themselves! By mysterious objective processes the workers in West London had broken from Labour which had lost its 'political hold on the working class'.

The following speaker, from the MIYC raised a few problems. Perhaps he said, the majority of workers didn't still follow Jones and Scanlon, vote Labour and expect Wilson to implement precisely what he promises to. But then, he said, one should expect to see an indication of this in the make-up of the meeting. Were there in the audience any stewards, secretaries or delegates from TUs who had been mandated to turn away from Labour? ... no response.

Then he went on to point out that the problem lay not in the identity of class consciousness and the objective crisis of capitalism but in their separation. This was, he said, why the Fourth International had a Transitional (a bridging) Programme, and not one for the simple seizure of power, which the Main Resolution, and the WRF, were proposing. There were steps between taking power and the struggle today, and these had to be crossed in reality, this was the real way to raise the consciousness of the working class. And this learning process of the workers, and the revolutionaries, must, in Britain flow through the Labour Party today, in order to prepare a real independent mass revolutionary vanguard tomorrow.

He pointed out the validity of the demands in the Transitional Programme to the struggle today.

Then followed, from comrades of the WRF, some remarkable contributions. First, a speaker from Taddington WRF who attacked the fight for 'A Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours' as a reformist diversion, because in today's conditions, this could only be a sliding scale downwards.' (our emphasis). 'Only the wholesale nationalisation of industry and the consequent exposure of Wilson, when he refused to do this, could solve anything for the working class'.

Then two more speakers described the sections of the Transitional Programme in the amendment as 'a diversion' and 'just a complicated cover-up for a sellout to reformism'.

### 'From a Scratch to Gangrene'

By this time, after two hours, the whole meeting had been devoted to an attack by the WRF on the two LFYS members, which led to an abandonment of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme and the writing-off of the mass organisations of the working class. Yet the worst was still to come.

J. Cassidy, a young worker from the CAV factory, and a WRF member, who had just had a letter published in WP attacking a steward in his factory (see this Bulletin) T. Hillier, compared the method of Hillier with that of the LFYS members. They were all, he said 'scabbing on the fight of the working class'. He related in detail that Hillier was a 'conscious element of betrayal in heading off the AUEV strike' (sic).

Immediately after this an LFYS comrade rose to defend Cde. Hillier, with whom he had worked, and raised the issue of workers' democracy, asking why this unsubstantiated slander was circulating in the workers' movement. He accused the WRF of violating the elementary principles of workers' democracy in the case of Labour Party member, Jean Faugier (also in this Bulletin), who was forcibly expelled from a meeting by WRF heavies, after being invited to speak. At this point Maureen Bambrick, national secretary of the YS, CC and IC member of the WRF interjected 'If you had come to our meeting we would have thrown you out as well'. All WRF members should take note of this remark. It shows quite clearly that from the bottom to the top, not only has the WRF rejected the Transitional Programme, but regards methods of thuggery and intimidation as legitimate in the workers' movement. WRF members must demand an enquiry into the meaning of this remark by Bambrick!

After this the resolutions were put to the vote. Two for the LFYS amendment, the rest for the main resolution. The LFYS delegates walked out leaving the WRF to set itself up as 'the new leadership' for workers in West London.

This 'Council of Action' meeting should have been featured in WP. A photographer/reporter was present all the time. A large number of WRF members from West London were there. Why did this event never appear in the paper? Undoubtedly the reason is that the authentic voice of Trotskyism was raised in the meeting, the WRF leadership hangs on the cliff edge of its own degeneration, and it knows it. Also because the Cassidy-Hunter affairs were brought to light, and a total WP blackout is operating on this.

As for the working class in West London, it knows nothing of the existence of its 'new leadership', it did not support the Main Resolution, it continues to fight through its mass party and its mass unions. Only the tragic, isolated degeneration of what has been the Trotskyist movement in Britain emerged clearly.

### THE CLAY CROSS CONFERENCE

The June 8th Conference called by the Clay Cross Labour Party received wide support. Represented were more than 600 workers organisations including delegates from over 300 local Labour Parties. Such a gathering of delegates from the ranks of the Labour Party, discussing how to implement working-class policies has not been seen for many years. The strength of this gathering was one more confirmation of the process of political radicalisation taking place in the working class. It was another demonstration that political developments in the working class are finding their expression in the mass organisations and particularly in the Labour Party itself.

Despite the large attendance, and the desire to fight of rank-and-file delegates from all parts of the country, the objective of the Conference was not achieved. It had been called in order to map out a course of action around the demands of the Clay Cross Labour Party - for the lifting of bans and fines on councillors, freeing the Shrewsbury six, ending trade with Chile and putting a stop to the activities of the NIRC. At the Conference itself, the Clay Cross Labour Party was pushed to the background with the 'Militant' group firmly in the saddle instead. Through their control of the chair, the platform and the conference arrangements, 'Militant' dominated and stage-managed the proceedings, effectively stifling any discussion of the way forward from the Conference.

Apart from the obvious selection of 'Militant' speakers from the floor to the exclusion of virtually all other tendencies, it was announced that no resolutions or amendments to the 'Militant' resolution were to be allowed. An amendment from the Lambeth Trades Council putting the position of the TCF, calling for a re-call Labour Party Conference, was ruled out of order in the morning and was ignored even after Jack Gale spoke to it.

The real reason for the stifling of discussion by 'Militant' was that they had no intention of letting this conference go ahead and organise a movement from the ranks of the LP. Instead of mobilising the strength of the working class through an active campaign to challenge the Labour government to stand by its election pledges, 'Militant' sought to channel the militancy of the conference away from action into sterile discussion.

This group has a history which is opportunist and rotten through and through. Despite their talk, ad nauseum, about the need for 'socialist ideas' and 'a socialist programme' and their solemn declarations about the need to 'nationalise the commanding heights of the economy under workers' control and management', they shy away from taking even the most modest steps to actually develop the workers' movement in the fight for socialism. Most of all they run away from any action when it poses a fight with the right wing. Their socialist phrases are divorced from practical action towards implementing them. Thus they act as a left cover for the Labour right wing, which acts to channel away the energies of sections of workers coming into conflict with the reformist apparatus.

The position of domination held by 'Militant' at the June 8th Conference, marked a development of the very useful role that they have played for the right wing. For some years now they have dominated the LYS and have been able to take control of the influx of youth into the Labour Party. Now this role is being extended to directing developments amongst broader layers of the movement, such as that which produced this Conference.



It should be noted that this position of being able to mislead thousands of youth and working class militants was not gained by chance. This position was given to Grant and Co., by none other than the Socialist Labour League. In adopting the attitude that the SLL/WRF has towards the Labour Party (which we have criticised in previous bulletins) and adopting an ultra-left stance, the forces which the SLL should have won to Trotskyism were left for 'Militant' to confuse, mislead and dissipate.

This 'Militant' continued in its policy on June 8th. The resolution called for no action, other than a vague appeal for a 'campaign' and the organisation of a meeting at the LE Conference in the Autumn! Meanwhile presumably it is just too bad if Clay Cross Council is surcharged, if the Chilean Junta is armed, if the TGWU is relieved of £2 million, and the Shrewsbury builders rot in jail! What this amounted to was avoiding a concrete course of struggle against the right wing, which would have upset the cosy niche that 'Militant', with the help of the SLL/WRF, has carved out for itself.

The WRF amendment was accepted onto the agenda after the lunch break (after M.F. E. Longden's support for it from the platform, and David Nuttall declaring support for it forced the 'Militant' to concede to the WRF their right to move it.) It did not offer a real alternative to the main resolution. In fact it enabled 'Militant' to set up a straw man to beat, providing a diversion for their avoidance of action.

Why do we say this? Let us look at what this demand for a re-call conference means. This demand has been raised by the WRF since soon after the minority Labour government was elected. According to WRF a re-call conference is necessary in order to mandate this government to carry through 'a socialist programme of nationalisation of the basic industries under workers' control and without compensation'. We are here confronted with the same basic theme that 'Militant' harps upon. The difference being that whilst the WRF wants a conference to pledge Wilson to expropriate the bourgeoisie, 'Militant', labouring under the same illusions that Wilson is a potential expropriator of capital, only talk about how nice it would be. Both tendencies imagine that by their calling for Wilson etc. to carry out a maximum 'Socialist programme' the Labour leaders will be 'exposed' when they don't. Unfortunately they both have forgotten the small matter of convincing the ranks of the Labour Party - the rank and file of the politically advanced workers - of the need for their 'socialist programme'.

In order to do this surely it is necessary to take up the present demands of the workers and demonstrate the link between their daily problems and socialism, in the course of the class struggle. This is what the transitional programme is all about. The method of the programme is neither demanding the immediate implementation of a 'socialist programme' now, nor is it passively to tail-end the existing level of the movement (the first approach adopted by WRF, the second by 'Militant'), but rather -

'It is necessary to help the masses in the process of their daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands stemming from today's conditions and today's level of consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat'.

Wide layers of the working class have yet to be convinced of the 'nationalisation' proposals which the WRF wants a conference to endorse. In the approach of supporters of the 'Bulletin' at the Conference, we have attempted to use the method of the Transitional Programme. (See appended amendment and leaflet).

For the 'wide layers of the working class' are not desirous of a new conference to implement a new programme. For them there already has been a conference of the Labour Party. This conference adopted a programme which was the basis on which the Labour government came to power, along with other policies such as the reinstatement of the Clay Cross councillors and cancelling the surcharges. For the working class - these demands are what they voted for - this is what they want from a Labour government. Instead of starting from the real contradiction between the words of the Labour leaders and their actions, instead of taking up the real aspirations of the working class which are conflicting with the intentions of the Labour government - the WRF substitute empty rhetoric about 'socialist programmes' and re-call conferences. In presenting this as an ultimatum, the WRF raises a diversion from the main fight now being taken up by the class - to make the government stand by its programme and mobilise the organised strength of the class to do this.

During the discussion in which the 'Militant' set out to attack the WRF in the form of a provocation, comrade Tom Hillier spoke out in defence of the WRF's right to put its amendment despite his disagreements with it. He raised this question as one of basic working class democracy. The WRF have not seen fit to report this in WF and instead have resorted to name-calling about 'abstentionist-revisionists'. Nowhere does the WRF reply to the political position put by supporters of the 'Bulletin' at this Conference. The WRF replied to 'Militant's' accusation of being outside the LP with the argument - 'it is not our fault, we were expelled' and pointed correctly, to 'Militant's' complicity in that expulsion. Yet such replies do not prove anything to ordinary Labour Party members, and do not excuse failure to work in the Labour Party today. (To use such a reason as an excuse for the WRF's abstention (for they are the real abstentionists) is to accept the rules as laid down by the bureaucracy.

We must repeat - the 'Militant' plays the reactionary role that it does today in the Labour Party and its youth movement thanks almost entirely to the sectarian record of the SLL/WRF over the last decade in relation to the mass organisations of the working class. In 1963-1964 when the SLL faction won the leadership of the Labour Party Young Socialists, the 'Militant' group was no more than a gleam in Grant's opportunist eyes. What was needed was a mother and a midwife and between them the bureaucracy and really provided both.

Finally, we must say in answer to the WF charge that we aided Militant by abstaining on the WRF amendment, that the WRF won the support of the following revisionist groups in the voting on its amendment - IS, IMF, Workers Right and Charter! Supporters of the 'Bulletin' group have been denied the right accorded to the WRF of moving its own amendment, sought to differentiate themselves both from the WRF-IS-IMF diversion of a re-call conference, and the Militant's leftist phrasemongering, by an abstention vote. No other principled course seemed open to us. We intend to press ahead with the fight against the Labour leaders along the lines indicated in our amendment, which proposes concrete action in place of diversionary conferences and maximalist sloganising.

**From Clay Cross Conference Resolution -**

'This Conference pledges itself to campaign within the Labour and trade union movement, and in the mass of the working class, for these aims and to prepare for a meeting at the Labour Party Conference to further this campaign.'

**The Bulletin Group Amendment -**

'last sentence after "working class" to read -  
to call to order every Labour MP who were all elected as representatives of the working class. In each area local meeting should be convened with Labour MP's at which the policy of this conference must be presented to them. In the event of the refusal of any MP to pledge to fight for the above demands then that MP should not be re-adopted as a candidate for the next election and must be replaced by one who will give such a pledge.'

**Southall Labour Party Young Socialists -**

**'AFTER THE CONFERENCE WHAT NEXT?'**

The present Labour government was elected to office in order to act on behalf of the working class. The points in Labour's election programme that won the greatest support from trade unionists and working-class housewives included:

- \* Repeal of the Housing Finance Act
- \* Repeal of the Counter Inflation Act
- \* Repeal of the Industrial Relations Act
- \* Renegotiation of the Common Market Entry terms subject to a national referendum.

Thus far, the Labour government has retreated from each of these election pledges. The question which faces the Central Hall Conference on June 8th is - How do we make Labour implement these pledges which millions of workers see as the first step towards solving their basic problems?

We endorse the four demands on which this conference has been called:

- \* No sale of arms to Chile
- \* Release the Shrewsbury Six
- \* Repayment of fines against unions by the IIRC
- \* Immediate, retrospective removal of all sentences, bans, fines etc. imposed on the Clay Cross Councillors, as laid down by resolution 191 of the Labour Party Conference.

From this conference we think that the next step in the fight to secure the implementation of these demands should be the convening of meetings in each constituency of representatives of the local Labour movement. Local Labour IT's should be invited to attend, where they must be given a mandate to fight for the implementation of these demands within the parliamentary Labour party and the Cabinet.

(Southall LAYS Cont.)

'Failure to give such undertakings can only mean one thing: that such Labour MP's are breaking the pledges on which they were elected to Parliament. They must be told by those who placed them in office to either represent the working class or receive the same treatment that was meted out to Taverner by the Lincoln Labour Party when he joined with the Tories and defied Labour Party Policy on the Common Market.

'We feel sure that if such meetings are called in every area represented at this conference, those who only talk about Socialism will rapidly be sorted out from those who wish to carry forward the struggle of the working class for its most basic demands, which at this stage find their expression in the policies outlined above.'

THE ATUA AND THE DEFENCE OF ALAN THORNETT

The long-awaited intervention of the T&GWU officials has taken a form which no Marxist in the trade unions can ignore. The ATUA members in British Leyland (Cowley) had in their branch committee statement called for Jack ('the fully fledged corporatist') Jones, General Secretary T&GWU, to personally intervene in the victimisation issue. The T&GWU set up an inquiry to which 200 trade union members submitted evidence - ASA and it shall be given!

Sources of Information

(Before reading on, let every comrade take note of the sources of information quoted in this piece, for the '6-day war' on the Bulletin comrades made charges that right-wing and Stalinist sources of information were used in the preparation of the Cowley special articles. If sources other than the WE are quoted it is because they are of importance to the WE-ATUA, and if untrue should be taken up and challenged in WE. Silence implies affirmation.)

On Thursday 6th June, 1974, WE (p.12) read as follows - 'LEYLAND RECOGNISES ALAN THORNETT', 'full facilities as steward are restored', but this article also made it quite clear that Thornett was no longer Chairman of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee - neither was he deputy Senior Steward. So who had won the battle at Cowley? The management clearly would have faced a strike, an official one, among the transport drivers now that the T&GWU's own inquiry had cleared Thornett - but given the disorientation of the rest of the plant's membership - the T&GWU would have had as much difficulty in gaining support for such a strike as the B. Leyland management would experience in attempting to maintain production.

The Election for Senior Steward at Cowley

Why should there be an election at all? Bob Fryer had been Senior Steward and Thornett a deputy. The WE hadn't announced any resignations - who therefore had deprived these men of their positions? Obviously as in the case of Alan Thornett, if a steward's credentials are no longer recognised he loses any other position arising out of his steward's role. But what of Bob Fryer? The famous inquiry had in fact been more critical of Fryer than of Thornett! Not only did the team of T&GWU officials organising the inquiry conclude that the giant 5/55 Branch be split in two (in order to form another branch) but also that future elections for senior stewards posts would involve the entire membership and not merely the shop stewards committee. Call in the Trade Union officials - ignore the fight to win mass support among the rank and file - engage in manoeuvres that encourage sectionalism and such results are only to be expected. WE reported -

'But enough intimidation and confusion has been created to prevent Thornett's election as Senior Shop Steward. Right-winger Reg. Parsons got roughly 1,800 votes, previous senior steward Bob Fryer 800, and Thornett about 400' Ibid.

Surely studying the 'Leyland recognises Alan Thornett' headline one would chalk that up as a victory ...the steward's clearance by the T&GWU inquiry and his restoration of rights by B-Leyland management surely would have enabled him to follow-up these 'gains' by a massive vote of confidence as senior steward? But no, instead a derisory 400 votes out of the 3000 cast.

### A Number of Questions for Workers Press

If people are not accurately informed through the daily paper, they sometimes show their dismay by drawing their own conclusions - WF doesn't tell the readers whether B. Leyland decided to accept Thornett as a shop steward in the transport section before or after the announcement that Thornett had come bottom of the poll? Another question poses itself in relation to this important election - Why did Thornett who had hitherto been a deputy ... stand against Bob Fryer? Why split the militant left vote? (Smith versus Bevan all over again!)

Confining oneself to WF as a source of information the conclusions are,

- a) A smashing victory - the inquiry clears Thornett - as a result he has his 'full facilities restored' - no 'intimidation and confusion' appears to have interfered with the findings of the T&GFWU's inquiry.
- b) Unfortunately the membership by and large ignore the findings of the inquiry and 'intimidation and confusion' prevent Thornett from 'election as senior steward' ibid.

So 'intimidation and confusion' are absent at the 'corporatist' level but are much in evidence at the level of the rank and file! Perhaps the rank and file were confused by the Left vs. Left vs. Right tactic! Or if they read WF they could just as easily become confused, e.g. 'mass support for Thornett', 'Right-wing defeated in branch', 'No mass meeting' 'call in Jack Jones' etc. etc. ad infinitum.

### ATUA Members Called for Official Intervention

It is quite useless to blame the inquiry by the T&GFWU and its findings - e.g. the splitting of the 5/55 Branch at Cowley, voting reforms etc on the right wing. The ATUA controlled 5/55 Branch Committee, called for such intervention and by heck they got it! Did they seriously believe that if Jack Jones (the 'fully fledged corporatist') had made a trip to Cowley things would have been any different? The exclusive reliance on the officials instead of also turning to the membership at large left the issue completely in the hands of Region 5 Midlands T&GFWU, and the results were quite predictable as anyone with TU experience, not least the ATUA leaders, should know. This kind of development has been reported by the Newsletter and WF hundreds of times - Docks, Engineering, Cars etc. etc.

### Capitalist Sources of Information

The Financial Times of 6.6.74 ran an article by Roy Rogers entitled 'Man on Leyland steward lifted - moderate wins poll', it continued 'The threat of a damaging official strike of transport workers at British Leyland's Austin-Morris assembly plant in Oxford was removed yesterday when the company agreed to reinstate Mr. Alan Thornett as a shop steward in the Cowley transport department', now the next few lines are, if true, of great importance to this subject, 'The managements' decision to accept Mr. Thornett back as a shop steward came only after it had been revealed that he had failed in a bid to be elected senior Transport and General Workers shop steward at the plant'. The piece also states something which again is important, something which WF, June 6th 1974, doesn't report i.e. that the election was by secret ballot. The Financial Times is jubilant - to Mr. Rogers it is a victory for the B.Leyland management. 'This represents a coup for B.L. management' Why then did B.L. concede by allowing Thornett to be recognised as a shop steward - an official strike by the entire work force? No, an official strike by the Transport section, which would have an equally disastrous effect on

production with the assembly workers sent home. The T&GWU, after its inquiry had cleared Alan Thornett, would not be able to avoid making such a dispute official, but clearly they weren't going to seek support from the entire membership and risk being 'turned over'. So the management, or so it appeared, only conceded when the results of the election were made known. The Financial Times also published the figures 'Mr. Parsons received 1,881 votes, Mr. Fryer, who held the post for the past 15 years, attracted 824 votes, while Mr. Thornett received the support of only 407 men from the 5,000 strong branch'. (FF 6.6.74)

#### Thornett's Appeal to Moderates Fails

'The Guardian' also enjoyed the Cowley ballot results - 'Ballot clinches Leyland triumph' claimed Martin Adeney, 6.6.74, 'British Leyland yesterday scored a major industrial relations triumph at its Cowley assembly plant' apparently Adeney had the impression that Thornett was re-instated before the election results were known. 'It (B.L. management) announced that it would accept Mr. Alan Thornett as a shop steward, thus averting the threat of an official T&GWU strike - and then saw him heavily beaten into third place in a shop floor ballot for senior shop steward'. The winner Reg Parsons was described as 'a 45-year old moderate'. He was a founder member of the ATUA! Since moderation appears to be the popular trend at Cowley - Thornett himself indulged in what could only be described as an election platform address in his union branch's journal 'Branch News' published by the 5/55 T&GWU branch at Cowley. He defended his record and outlined the management's attacks on agreements - but tucked away in the middle of this article one finds his appeal for 'moderate' support. 'In many cases we were prepared to recommend an increase in effort. In the trim shop for example we offered the company a 50 per cent increase on the Maxi track long before the dispute took place but this was rejected by the company who demanded 125 per cent.' How unreasonable! Offer them an inch - they take a mile! Why offer them anything? Believe it or not, this was published in WF on Monday 3rd June 1974! And Healy slanders comrade Hillier as a strike-breaker.

#### Where the Blame Lies

We don't need to refer to any of the papers to understand that the job organisation at Cowley has been seriously weakened - sectionalism and manipulation have played their part in this defeat - those responsible continue to hail the affair as a victory - but this is a line that is untenable, for as the WF rightly points out 'B.L.C is determined to impose massive speed-up and redundancies in an effort to solve their difficulties' That the ATUA members in Cowley were unable to lead the fight against this attack and instead called in the 'corporatists' who in turn 'chopped' the organisation on the plant - is a fact - this charge lies on the shoulders of the WRE-ATUA leadership.

There is nothing in the Cowley Special article on the defence of Alan Thornett which is incompatible with the results of the battle outlined overleaf. The reliance on the officials put the ATUA militants in an invidious position - to demand that they defend steward's rights is 100% correct, but to rely on them 100% is suicidal. Had B.Leyland continued to refuse to permit Thornett to act as a steward this would have challenged the right of workers to choose their own representatives. The T&GWU 'corporatists' could not permit this and after the inquiry had cleared Thornett they had little choice but to call an official strike. This would have meant a total stoppage - the transport men would be the one's to be called out - but this would soon halt the entire Cowley plant. Thornett's

department according to the branch statement had a wonderful record so all in all E. Leyland won hands down - they not only saw Thornett removed from his Chairman and Deputy Senior Stewards jobs, but Bob Fryer as well! An added bonus was the splitting of the 5/55 Branch and the election of Reg Parsons. Kick the militants who can only respond in a limited, sectional manner - Kick them hard enough and they will call in the officials who in turn will destroy job organisation and ensure profitability. Those who are miles from the shop floor can no doubt move on to the next 'piece of action', but the ATUA in particular and the conscious militants know that Cowley is a serious defeat and are beginning to apportion the blame where it rightly belongs - on the leadership of the URP.



DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND THE WRF

To conclude this issue of bulletin, which of necessity has focused on the question of democracy in the workers' movement, we reproduce the WRF Constitution as adopted at its founding conference in November 1973. In the course of discussion with WRF members, we learn that many have not read it, itself a breach of the Constitution. Moreover with the Realy-Panda-Torrance leadership almost daily violating entire sections of this Constitution, we think it appropriate to remind WRF members of their democratic rights which are now threatened by certain of the party's leaders. In re-printing this document, however, we should point out that clause 8, subsections B and C are so worded as to leave obscure the real extent of rank and file members' minority rights. While on the one hand subsection A states that 'all minorities have the right to express dissenting opinion and organise within the party ...', subsection C speaks of the 'procedure for the establishment of a minority right', as if this was not the automatic right of all members of the WRF conferred on them by their being members of the party. Moreover, this subsection C presumes that only members of the Political Committee, Central Committee and Area Committee, will avail themselves of this right. Why cannot branch committee members, or for that matter, rank and file members, also establish minorities? This subsection is so phrased as to make possible the denial of minority rights to such members (who constitute the vast majority of WRF members), while even members of the same bodies can only 'establish their minority rights', (not exercise them, please note).

We predict that these loop-holes will be exploited to the full by the Realy-Panda-Torrance clique in the coming months as opposition to their opportunist policies grows inside the WRF. Indeed, we have evidence that such malpractices have already begun. The revision of the Constitution in accordance with Bolshevik democratic centralism is therefore one of the most pressing tasks facing members of the WRF today.

" WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY - Constitution

## 1) AIMS

- a) The aim of the Party is to prepare and mobilise the working class for the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of working class power and the building of a socialist society.
- b) This Party bases its policy on the theory of Marxism as developed by Lenin and Trotsky, the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and the Founding Programme of the Fourth International (1938).
- c) This Party is the British Section of the Fourth International affiliated to the International Committee and fighting for the building of the Fourth International.

## 2) MEMBERSHIP

- a) Any person who accepts the programme, policy and constitution of the Party, agrees to work under the direction of its national bodies and of the appropriate local organisation and pays financial subscriptions, is eligible for membership. Applicants for membership will first serve three months candidate membership as a period of integration into the Party. Candidate members have discussion rights and work with the local bodies of the Party, pay the minimum subscriptions, but have no vote. At the

## 2a Cont.

end of three months, either full membership or a further candidate period of up to six months will be decided by the branch. No renewal of candidate membership is permitted after nine months.

- b) All members of the Party must be members of their appropriate trade unions and shall work in other working class organisations as required by decisions of National Congress and the Central Committee of the Party.

## 3) BRANCHES

- a) The basic unit of the Party is the branch, which shall consist of three or more members, based on locality or place of work, and is responsible for control of all the work of its members including that in other organisations.
- b) Each branch shall meet at least once a fortnight, and elect its officers at least annually. These shall consist of a Secretary, Chairman, Treasurer, and Workers Press Organiser. These officers shall be members of the branch Committee which is responsible for the work of the branch between meetings. Only the branch meetings can take policy decisions of the branch.

## 4) NATIONAL CONGRESS

- a) A national congress of the membership represented by delegates from local branches shall be convened at least once a year, and shall constitute the highest body of the Party.
- b) Delegates shall be elected on the basis of one for every seven members or major part thereof, except that each branch shall be entitled to at least one delegate. Where a minority exists in a branch, that minority shall have proportional representation on delegates to national congress.
- c) All delegates to a national congress shall participate with a free vote.
- d) Decisions at national congress shall be reached by a simple majority.
- e) A special national congress must be called at the request of one third of the branches or one third of the members, through a recorded vote in the branches.
- f) Only a national congress can amend the constitution.
- g) The Central Committee shall open congress discussion at least eight weeks before Congress by issuing draft policy resolutions to all members. Resolutions and amendments to the constitution and to documents, submitted up to three weeks before congress by branches, or groups of members comprising one third or more of the membership of a given branch, shall be circulated to the branches by the Central Committee. Other resolutions and amendments may be submitted up to and including the congress itself.

## 5) CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND POLITICAL COMMITTEE

- a) The National congress shall elect a Central Committee consisting of full members and alternate members in the following way:

5a cont.

Congress shall appoint a panel committee, consisting of one member appointed by the retiring Central Committee and two members who shall not be members of the Central Committee, elected directly from the floor of the congress. The panel committee shall draw up from the comrades nominated by the Central Committee, by branches and by delegates, a recommended list. Congress will vote on this list after amendments to it have been voted upon. The panel committee will report on all nominations received in addition to the recommended list.

- b) In proportion to the support it has amongst delegates, a minority at congress shall have the right to seats on the Central Committee, and allowance must be made for this in the panel committee's recommended list.
- c) The Central Committee shall elect a Political Committee and other Committees where necessary.
- d) The Political Committee shall carry full powers of the Central Committee between meetings of the Central Committee. The political committee shall meet at least once a month. The political committee is responsible to the Central Committee and reports to it on its work.
- e) Between national congresses full authority shall be vested in the Central Committee, which shall implement the policy agreed by national congress and make decisions necessary to develop the work of the Socialist Labour League. It shall meet at least every three months, and more frequently if the political committee thinks this necessary.
- f) Alternate members do not carry a vote on Central Committee decisions except where an alternate member replaces an absent full member.

#### 6) AREA COMMITTEES

Area Committees shall consist of two or more representatives from each branch in the given area, and shall be responsible for the overall political development of the work in the area and for the co-ordination of the work of the branches. Full time organisers in the area work with the Area Secretary as an organising sub-committee of the Area Committee. In large areas, such as London, sub-districts should be organised.

#### 7) FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- a) Members' financial contributions will be fixed in accordance with the financial position of individual members. The minimum Contribution shall be 10p. per week, except in circumstances which in the opinion of the local branch warrant a lower contribution.
- b) Members more than eight weeks in arrears will be lapsed unless there are some special circumstances which in the opinion of the local branch are responsible for the arrears.
- c) Only fully paid up members shall be eligible for election as delegates to national congress, unless there are some special circumstances which in the opinion of the local branch are responsible for the arrears.